Church Administrator's Handbook
2005 Edition

Community of Christ

Contacting Headquarters Offices

More information concerning many items contained in this handbook can be obtained by contacting the church's headquarters in Independence, Missouri, USA. Offices are open 8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m. (800—1700) in the central time zone (GMT minus 6 hours; GMT minus 5 hours from the first Sunday in April to the last Sunday in October).

Mailing address:
Community of Christ Headquarters
1001 W. Walnut
Independence MO 64050-3562
USA

Telephone:
1-800 825-2806 (US and Canada only, toll-free)
+1-816-833-1000

Worldwide Web:
http://www.CofChrist.org

The church's Web site is a source of current information about headquarters offices and services, including detailed contact information.

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ISBN 10 0-8309-1119-7
ISBN 13 978-0-8309-1119-6

Introduction

The *Church Administrator's Handbook* is a summary of policies, legislative actions, and established procedures intended to provide guidance to the administration of the church's various ministries, especially in field jurisdictions. Congregational pastors, mission center presidents, financial officers, and other leaders will find that many commonly asked questions are answered in these pages.

The 2000 World Conference approved new church bylaws that reorganized mid-level field administration into mission centers rather than the multiple forms of organization that were present formerly. This handbook intends to reflect those changes. The bylaws themselves may be found in the current edition of *World Conference Resolutions* (Herald House).

In its current form, this handbook applies most directly to the church in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Western Europe. General principles apply to the church wherever it is organized, however, and field apostles are responsible for making procedural adjustments in jurisdictions where legal and cultural factors call for alternative arrangements. They do this in consultation with pastors, mission center presidents, financial officers, and appropriate World Church officers.

General principles apply broadly wherever the church exists. For example, specific financial procedures may vary from nation to nation, depending on legal requirements, the nature of banking and economic systems, etc. Nevertheless, all financial procedures should reflect integrity, transparency, and concern for the benefit of the church's ministries as well as complying with local legal requirements.

The success of the church depends primarily on whether or not its ministries adequately reflect the ministries of Jesus Christ. The policies and procedures contained in this handbook are intended to allow those ministries to occur without being unduly hindered by the mechanics of church operations. The church exists to reflect the ministries that we see in our Lord, and it is to that end that we serve.

—*The First Presidency*

Contents

Part I: Organization

1. Nature of Governance in the Community of Christ

Theocratic Democracy

The church, as defined by President Joseph Smith III, is a theocratic democracy. It was brought into being by divine initiative, is guided and administered by divine authority, is sustained by the light of the Holy Spirit, and exists for divine purposes. In response to divine initiative, members share responsibility for governing the church. "...[A]ll things must be done in order and by common consent in the church, by the prayer of faith" (Doctrine and Covenants 27:4).[1]

Priesthood

The government of the church is by divine authority through priesthood. It should be noted that the government of the church is *through* priesthood, not *by* priesthood. The distinction is important. Ministers must first of all be disciples. Disciples are those who seek to transform this world into the kingdom of God and Christ. In no other way can their claim to divine authority become rich and meaningful.[2]

Priesthood Calls

The basic principles pertaining to priesthood calls are that all calls shall be initiated by appropriate administrative officers, shall receive necessary administrative approvals, shall be presented to the candidate for acceptance, and shall be approved by an appropriate conference of members. Specific procedures are established by the First Presidency.[3]

Leadership and Administrative Functions

Leadership and administration is through members of the priesthood, acting according to their several callings and with the consent of the church. Supervisory leadership of the ministries of the church is vested in the following groups:

a. The *First Presidency* is composed of the president and two counselors, and they preside over the whole church. This includes responsibility for the World Conference, field ministries, priesthood quorums and orders, and headquarters functions.

b. The *Council of Twelve Apostles* is responsible for the evangelistic witness of the church. Individual apostles may be assigned to various responsibilities of church leadership, including field administration.

c. The *Presiding Bishopric* is composed of the presiding bishop and two counselors. They are the chief financial officers and trustees of the church, and are responsible for the administration of the temporal affairs of the whole church.

Together these groups function as the leadership body of the church known as the World Church Leadership Council. To this council, from time to time, additional persons are added because of the unique contribution they make to the administrative, programmatic, or missionary ministries of the church.

Other leadership functions are vested in the following councils, quorums, and orders:

- Council of Presidents of Seventy
- Quorums of Seventy
- Quorum of High Priests
- Order of Bishops
- Order of Evangelists[4]

Legislative Functions

Legislation is considered and enacted in World Conference, mission center conferences, and in congregational conferences. These conferences meet at the call of the responsible administrative officers, at times and places determined by the bodies concerned, or without such provisions at times and places set by the responsible administrative officers.

a. **Authority of Conferences.** Each conference has authority to legislate for those it represents, insofar as it does not usurp rights lawfully centered elsewhere. Accordingly, no congregational conference can legislate for its mission center, such as requiring certain acts on the part of mission center leaders and no congregational or mission center conference can enact binding legislation on matters of World Church importance.

b. **Limits.** No legislative body can rightfully take to itself administrative or judicial functions.

c. **Right to Nominate**. It is the right of all members to make nominations in filling elective offices in the jurisdictions of the church, but this action in no sense denies the right of presiding officers to present concurrent nominations for the filling of such elective offices nor does it suppose that every office should be filled by election. Often program assistants are appointed by presiding officers and sustained by the appropriate conference.[5]

Judicial Functions

When conflicts between members or on issues of church polity arise, every attempt should be made to resolve them through the ministry of reconciliation. When these attempts have not been successful, in extreme cases, members of the church have right of access to the courts of the church for protection or redress. Bishop's courts, or where these are not feasible, elders' courts, are standing courts and have original jurisdiction. The Standing High Council may hear appeals

from bishop's courts and has original jurisdiction in some matters. However, the First Presidency has the authority to determine whether any case is subject to a court hearing or a rehearing on appeal.[6]

Common Consent

A basic principle of decision making in the Community of Christ is common consent. Common consent respects the rights of the people to assent to the general conduct of business within the church and to sustain those called of God to provide leadership. Common consent is exercised when members assemble in conferences in congregations, mission centers, and at the World Conference. Leadership is exercised through the responsibility of presiding officers and members to make proposals to the various conferences to which they are responsible and through recognizing that these conferences have the responsibility to review such proposals, to share points of view, and to vote as they feel led by the Holy Spirit.

The rights of the body are safeguarded through the process of common consent as follows:

a. By the guidance of the Holy Spirit in calling members to the priesthood. All priesthood members are to be ordained according to the gifts and callings of God unto them, and they are to be ordained by the power of the Holy Spirit which is in those who ordain them.

b. By the requirement that calls to the priesthood be presented for approval to an appropriate conference.

c. By the right of approval and disapproval which rests with the people who are asked to sustain World Church leaders at World Conference, and local leaders at local conferences.

d. By the requirement that all things be done with due regard for the duties and privileges of other ministers and members and in harmony with the legislative enactments of the body.

e. By the provisions for correcting disorder (Doctrine and Covenants 122:10, 126:10).

f. By the understanding that, for the good of all, properly selected leaders must be allowed to do their work without undue interference, subject always to the provisions made to cover special situations.[7]

Common consent is a goal that all decision-making processes in the church seek to achieve. It is not confined to one specific process. In common consent, there is general agreement that a decision has been made by the appropriate person or body, that all relevant perspectives have been considered, and that the process used to arrive at the decision fosters the spirit of community within the church.

Common consent is a central element in the polity of the Community of Christ, but its definition has always been somewhat elusive. On one hand, it means something more than majority rule, but it means something less than full unanimity on the course of action to be taken.

Perhaps the definition of common consent is elusive because common consent is, above all, a goal to be achieved. Depending on the prevailing culture and the operational context, a number of methods might be used to achieve this end. This section will explore the concept of common consent in terms of the core values of the church. Hopefully, this will allow us to explore the operational issues with more clarity.

Common Consent in Relation to Theocratic Democracy

It may be helpful, first of all, to explore the idea of common consent in relation to another theological element of our polity, the idea of theocratic democracy. This term was initially proposed by Joseph Smith III as a description of the church's governmental structure. It is an ambiguous term, and rightly so. In theocratic democracy, the theocratic and democratic elements are held in tension, with neither claiming absolute precedence over the other. Rather, they support each other while holding each other in check.

It is, perhaps, worth noting that the process is not described as "prophetic democracy." This would imply that the will of the people is held in tension with the will of God. This could imply that the will of the governing authorities of the church is the same thing as the will of God. Yet, this is precisely the question: Who has the better understanding of the will of God for this time—the governing authorities or the people?

The governing authorities (the "theocracy") seek to understand the will of God, but like the people, their understanding is always less than perfect. A healthy tension between the governing authorities and the people does not guarantee that the church is always in perfect alignment with God's will, but it does provide fertile ground for repentance—a change of heart.

In this context, common consent describes decisions arrived at in this tension between the church's governing authorities and the people. The existence of a tension between varying perspectives among the people is only one part of the process, and the existence of tension means that decisions made by the church are always temporal—"for now." We do not win or lose in some final sense. Rather, the community makes the best decision that it can, for now, and continues to reevaluate its direction in the face of experience.

Theological Underpinnings of Common Consent

Common consent is rooted in the church's theology and is based on the worth of persons and the call to community. Decision-making processes play an important role in the spirit of community within the church. Therefore, the goal of common consent in the church is to arrive at broad agreement about issues of importance to the church community.

Various methods can be used to make decisions in the spirit of common consent. The best method to use depends on the cultural context, the significance of the

decision, the intensity of feeling generated by an issue, the time frame within which an issue must be decided, the principle of the worth of persons, etc. Leaders should use discretion in determining the best methods to use in specific circumstances.

Decision making is a stewardship exercised by a group of church members on behalf of a larger body of members. The feelings and concerns of those not present must always be taken into account when a decision is made.

Invariably, consideration of minority viewpoints will strengthen deliberations and decisions. Minority perspectives can often be incorporated into a decision in ways that improve it.

The principle of the "worth of persons" suggests that disagreement is not disloyalty. Disciples should feel free to share their perspectives openly and without fear of retribution or ostracism. Careful and respectful consideration of alternative perspectives is an important element in reaching common consent.

Operational Principles of Common Consent

From these core values, the following ten operational principles for common consent in church settings can be distilled. These are based on the history of church governance blended with the fundamental desire to respect the worth of all persons:

1. Common consent on direction, policy making, and theological understandings is essential for effective church government.

2. Common consent can be defined as general agreement or assent to direction, policy making, and theological understanding. Such agreement is promoted through open, honest, and unfettered exchange of views in a prayerful environment of conciliatory speech, freedom from recrimination, openness to the view and opinions of others, and a continual willingness to reexamine and revise one's point of view based on such an exchange of views and the impress of the Holy Spirit.

3. General agreement might be defined in the ultimate sense as a unanimous vote of the body. Yet given recognition of the worth of all persons and the church's high regard for diversity of thought and theological understanding, unanimity may not always be possible, nor, in fact, is it always desirable if it does not honestly reflect the feelings of the body.

4. The nature of a true conferring process presupposes differences of opinion not just on issues that are easily resolved, but on matters of great import for which generations may be required before an agreement on direction is possible.

5. Common consent, if it truly involves a process that respects human diversity and openness, cannot assume that the result will always be unanimous agreement. To arrive at a sense of general agreement there must be a willingness to accept dissenting views as valid and not to attribute unchristian motives such as lack of support for leadership, a desire for self-aggrandizement, or an attitude of unwillingness to compromise to those who cannot in good conscience be part of a unanimous agreement on any particular direction, policy, or theological understanding.

6. The essence of common consent then rests more on the process undertaken to achieve it and the attitudes of those engaged in the process of seeking it than in the relative degree of unanimity resulting from it.

7. Of course more agreement is better than less. Even though unanimity is the goal, there must be a concomitant willingness to make decisions with less than this level of agreement if the church is not going to be paralyzed in its decision-making processes and also respect human worth and dignity. From time to time this may mean that decisions are taken on the basis of a majority agreement, meaning more favoring a particular course of action or position than oppose it.

8. To be sure, this is not a simple proposition and care should be taken so that this form of agreement does not become reliance on a "simple" majority. Such a majority does not presuppose the process of careful exchange of views and the willingness to alter one's viewpoint as described earlier. Again, it is not so much the decisional point as the process of give and take preceding it that is the hallmark of true common consent. Indeed, it might be said that a decision made through a true process of common consent that results in agreement by more than half of those involved in decision making is, in fact, a "complex" majority, one achieved after careful deliberations rooted in mutual forbearance and respect for differing points of view.

9. Such a decisional method assumes no motives by any member other than the best interest of the church as seen through the eyes of reason, experience, understanding of scripture, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

10. Common consent assumes responsibility on the part of each person involved in the conferring process, whether they are part of a majority or a minority, after decisions are made.

Notes

1. Bylaws of the Community of Christ, Article III, Section 1.
2. Ibid., Article III, Section 2.
3. Ibid., Article III, Section 3.
4. Ibid., Article III, Section 5.
5. Ibid., Article III, Section 6.
6. Ibid., Article III, Section 7.
7. Ibid., Article III, Section 4.

2. Field Organization

A. Congregations

Congregations are communities of disciples, and they form the fundamental unit of the church's administrative, ministerial, and missional life. Congregations gather frequently, preferably at least weekly, to engage in worship, education, fellowship, and other preparation for mission. Out of a common sense of vision, each congregation seeks to engage in significant missional ministries and together celebrates life as a gift from God as caring, service, prayer, and love are offered and received. Formally organized local units needing extra support or assistance in their early years of development may be organized as *emerging congregations*.

Congregations are grouped into larger jurisdictional units known as *mission centers* for mutual support and to augment the ministries that each can offer. The structure of a congregation varies depending on its mission and structures developed by the World Church and the local mission center. Congregations are encouraged to develop structures that will assist them in freeing the giftedness of people and in meeting the needs for ministry evident in their local communities.

1. Organization:

a. Congregations may be organized by the authority of the First Presidency or any member of the Council of Twelve having jurisdiction. At the time of organization, a congregation should have sufficient members, priesthood, and material resources to provide a stable presence of the church in the community in which it is located. It should also show promise of potential further growth and expansion. The World Church secretary and the World Church recorder should be informed as these are established so that a record of the organization may be made.

b. Analysis of congregations with large memberships may demonstrate membership clusters that suggest establishing new congregations. Congregations may cooperate with mission centers in establishing emerging congregations in circumstances that show promise for evangelistic growth.

c. Congregations should cooperate with their respective mission centers to give significant attention to assisting in the development of new congregations where appropriate. In this process, the mission center should play a leading role in assisting in new church planting.

d. If congregations are deemed to be below a level necessary to maintain stability, consideration should be given to providing additional strength, relocation, merger with another congregation, or disorganization.

2. Pastors:

The pastor is the chief spiritual and administrative officer of the congregation. The pastor is called to be a visionary leader who seeks to engender in the congregation a sense of mission and who helps its members maintain a strong sense of kinship and love. The pastor seeks to identify the giftedness of the members and the needs and opportunities for ministry in the community. From the intersection of these factors, the pastor leads the congregation into ministries of service, witness, and caring.

3. Selection of Pastors:

a. Ideally, one holding the office of high priest or elder should be selected as pastor. If no high priests or elders are available, or reason exists for selecting another, then the priests, teachers, and deacons, in that order, may be considered. The pastor must be a member of the priesthood. Ordinarily, neither evangelists nor bishops should be selected. If it becomes necessary to select an evangelist to serve as pastor, the evangelist would need to be temporarily released from that office for the duration of the pastorship to serve as a high priest. A similar procedure should be considered for bishops, depending on the circumstances.

b. Members of the congregation attending the congregational conference may nominate eligible persons to serve as pastor. The mission center president also has the right to nominate a candidate, either in person or by written correspondence. A pastor should be elected by a majority vote of the congregational conference.

c. Some congregations may find it helpful to use a nominating committee or a search committee, broadly representative of the congregation itself, to discuss leadership needs and to seek out those who might serve well in the role of pastor.

d. Pastors should be elected annually. To provide for continuity of leadership, some mission centers may suggest that pastors be willing to serve for a period of several years, but a congregation should elect its pastor for terms of one year at a time.

4. Co-pastors:

a. In certain situations, congregations may wish to elect more than one person to the position of pastor. All persons elected as pastors should be members of the priesthood, preferably of the Melchisedec priesthood.

b. Where two individuals are co-pastors, both may be recorded with the World Church as being pastor. Where three or more persons share pastoral duties, one person should be named pastor of record and reported to the World Church recorder.

c. Where co-pastors are elected, major administrative decisions (such as priesthood calls and major program initiatives) should be made mutually between the co-pastors.

d. Successful co-pastor relationships require a high degree of communication and coordination. While individual co-pastors may take primary leadership in various areas of congregational life, major decisions should be made in ways that allow for mutual agreement among the co-pastors.

5. Mission Center President/Pastor Relationships:

Pastors work closely with the mission center president and cooperate in all mission center activities. Because the mission center president is responsible for the care and direction of the mission center's congregations, the pastor is accountable to the mission center president for the conduct of the affairs of the congregation.

6. Counselors to the Pastor:

Pastors may appoint counselors to serve as members of the congregational pastorate. Those selected should be members of the priesthood and should be sustained by a vote of the congregational conference. Counselors serve at the pleasure of the pastor, and their tenure in office automatically ends with the resignation, death, or replacement of the pastor. The appointment of counselors does not preclude pastors from appointing other assistants, who may or may not be members of the priesthood, as they deem necessary.

7. Duties and Responsibilities of Pastors:

The following is a reference list of the major duties and responsibilities of congregational pastors. While local situations vary, this list represents the common activities and ministries of most pastors.

The pastor

a. is responsible for ensuring that congregational life and ministry function in a balanced way;

b. initiates, coordinates, and is responsible for these ministries, even though responsibility is delegated at many points;

c. establishes an appropriate congregational structure to carry out the ministries of the church;

d. convenes and chairs all congregational conferences, except as others are designated by the pastor or on the request of the mission center president, or designate. Uses the church's bylaws, World Conference resolutions, and generally accepted rules of parliamentary procedure as the authorities for conducting congregational conferences. In the United States, Canada, and in the World Conference, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* is the parliamentary authority. In other settings, it may be used, or some other culturally appropriate rules may be used;

e. convenes and chairs meetings of the pastoral team (pastor and counselors) at least monthly;

f. on a quarterly basis, convenes and chairs the congregational leadership team composed of key congregational leaders, where the congregational program of ministry is planned and activities are coordinated;

g. encourages the congregation and its leaders to discern a vision for that congregation, and to establish specific short- and long-range goals for fulfillment of that vision;

h. understands and supports the relationship of the congregation, mission center, and World Church in pursuing the ministries of the church;

i. attends at least one pastor's training event each year, the purpose being leadership education, awareness of and appreciation for World Church resources, as well as peer fellowship;

j. encourages congregational leaders to attend mission center and World Church leadership meetings and workshops;

k. develops leadership within the congregation:

- encourages study programs in leadership training, Temple School curriculum, and other education opportunities;
- gives prayerful attention to the discernment and nurture of ministerial gifts and callings among the membership;
- provides opportunities for leadership experiences, carefully matching personal giftedness and potential ministries, and providing follow-up support;

l. recommends people to serve in appointed offices;

m. initiates appropriate calls to the priesthood as led by the spirit of inspiration and the testimony of the life of the one being called;

n. maintains a relationship with the priesthood members in the congregation as that of a minister's minister:

- keeps in close touch with them, their families, and their needs;
- encourages and motivates them in their ministry including a periodic review of their ministry;

o. coordinates the ministry of priesthood and members as they undertake specific responsibilities in harmony with each one's authority and giftedness;

p. promotes unified congregational support for the Disciple's Generous Response, which the congregational financial officer directs under the leadership of the mission center financial officer:

- develops, in cooperation with the congregational financial officer, the congregational budget; all program leaders should be consulted in this process;
- makes recommendations, in consultation with the congregational financial officer, to the congregation on desired modification and repairs of church plant, new equipment, etc.;

- assures that all congregational priesthood and leaders participate in the Disciple's Generous Response;

q. considers a lifestyle of stewardship and generosity to be a spiritual principle of the gospel; in cooperation with the congregational financial officer, promotes stewardship accountability, generous offering of time, talent, and treasure, and the raising of funds for local budgetary needs;

r. carries basic responsibility for the missionary ministries of the congregation in coordination with the congregational missionary coordinator;

s. ensures opportunity for the regular expression of the sacraments of the church;

t. is responsible for review, where appropriate, of all sacraments requested within the congregational area;

u. is responsible for dealing with any infractions of church law that occur in the congregation; ministry of reconciliation should first be attempted, and if there is no positive response to such ministry, appropriate administrative action should be taken after consultation with the mission center president;

v. requests the ministry of World Church personnel through the mission center president when making requests for guest ministry, and seeks approval from the mission center president for all self-sustaining guest ministry from beyond the mission center boundaries;

w. presides over the congregation but does not "possess" it; directs the work of the congregation with love and equity in all programs and functions;

x. presides over worship services often and preaches periodically; and

y. models an affirmative, vision-directed, goal-oriented, and Spirit-led leadership stance, which will assist the congregation to claim, expand, and add to its strengths of ministry:

   - assures that the congregation is represented in the community clergy association or ministerial alliance;
   - serves as official liaison between the congregation, the mission center, and the World Church, assuring that necessary reports are completed and submitted on time; and
   - calls for the annual audit of the congregations financial records.

8. Congregational Conferences:

a. *Membership*: All baptized members of a congregation are members of the congregational conference. Administrative officers having jurisdiction over the congregation have voice and vote in a congregational conference by right of their office.

b. *Presiding at Congregational Conferences*: The pastor presides over the congregational conference. The counselors may preside at the request of the pastor or when the pastor is absent. Members of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, mission center presidents, or their authorized representatives may preside as a courtesy or in special circumstances (Bylaws, Article V, Section 6).

c. *Frequency and Scheduling of Congregational Conferences*: Congregational conferences should be held as often as necessary to aid communications, develop cohesiveness, and transact necessary business. At least one congregational conference should be held each year. The scheduling of all congregational conferences should be coordinated between the pastor and the mission center president.

d. *Recommended Order of Proceedings*: The order recommended for a congregational conference may vary, depending on cultural circumstances. A suggested order of proceedings in the section on "Planning and Conducting Conferences" is appropriate to most settings.

e. *Special Congregational Conference:* Special congregational conferences may be called by the pastor. Care should be taken to see that those who have a right to participate have sufficient notice of time, place, and business to be considered (Bylaws Article V, Section 4). Notice should normally be given at least two weeks before the conference.

f. *Voting*: Members of a congregation must be present in order to vote. Proxy voting and absentee voting are not permitted.

g. In unusual circumstances the presiding minister next higher in the administrative line (the mission center president or field apostle) may call and preside over a conference in any of the congregations that constitute the larger jurisdiction, subject to the confirming action of the conference when it convenes (WCR 1097).

9. Bylaws:

No congregation may establish bylaws. The rules given in the World Church Bylaws and the procedures in the *Church Administrator's Handbook* should be followed.

10. Record Keeping:

a. *Change of Address*: Any pastor who moves should immediately notify the mission center president and ensure that the congregational recorder (or the mission center recorder when necessary) makes the change in the World Church records. Where this is impractical, information may be provided to the World Church recorder via mail or e-mail.

b. *Change of Pastor:* Any change in pastor should be brought to the attention of the mission center president, and notice should be given to the World Church recorder.

c. *Congregational Files:* Each congregation should maintain files of the following information so that it can be transmitted to the next pastor to aid in continuity of administration.

(1) Congregational officers: a complete, up-to-date mailing list along with telephone numbers and e-mail addresses where appropriate;
(2) membership mailing list: a membership mailing list should be kept. Most congregations use the Ministry Information System, a computer database housed at World Church headquarters that maintains accurate mailing information, records of sacraments, etc. In some jurisdictions the field apostle may establish other procedures for maintaining and reporting this information;
(3) current priesthood list with office, age, and activity indicated;
(4) the current editions of *World Conference Resolutions* and the *Church Administrator's Handbook*;
(5) information about any priesthood calls in process;
(6) copy of congregational conference minutes;
(7) calendar of scheduled congregational activities, building reservations, etc.;
(8) statistical reports on congregational membership, finances, attendance, and other information;
(9) audited financial reports reflecting operating and building fund budgets, income and expenses, and fund balances;
(10) files of correspondence with the mission center president and other supervisory officers;
(11) a current list of all registered youth/children's workers in the congregation; and
(12) files related to priesthood silences, registered youth/ children's workers, and other confidential member actions should not be kept in the pastor's possession, but transmitted to the First Presidency.

11. Secretary:

The congregational secretary should be elected by the congregational conference with the right of concurrent nomination resting with the pastor and with the members of the conference. The secretary is responsible for keeping the minutes of all congregational conferences and for assisting the pastor in preparing for conferences and meetings.

12. Congregational Financial Officer:

Congregational financial officers (CFO) are appointed by the mission center financial officer (MCFO) in consultation with the mission center president and congregational pastor and are sustained by a congregation conference. The CFOs function on behalf of the Presiding Bishopric and are supervised by the mission center financial officer with respect to financial procedures. As such the MCFO must be a signatory on all congregation accounts. The CFO, as part of the congregational leadership team, supports the pastor and is accountable to the pastor and the congregation. The CFO must be a member of the church, although the CFO may appoint assistants (who need not be members of the church) for tasks such as data entry, bookkeeping, etc.

The specific duties of the CFO in the United States are summarized in the following profile. In nations where adjustments to this profile are required, it is the responsibility of the field apostle to work with the Presiding Bishopric in developing appropriate adjustments.

a. Ministerial Activities

- Teaching and preaching of stewardship
- Teaching of A Disciple's Generous Response principles (financial stewardship aspects)
- Promotion of incorporating A Disciple's Generous Response principles into members' daily lives
- Promotion of church goals through preaching, teaching, and presence in the congregations
- Providing ministry through the use of the Oblation fund

b. Financial Management

- Responsible for congregational assets, to include
  - Assisting the pastor and program leaders in the development of the annual conference-approved budgets;
  - monitoring of annual conference-approved budgets;
  - timely reporting of mission tithes contributions;
  - timely processing of contributor reports;
  - maintenance of contributors' addresses;
  - collecting, receipting, and accounting for all congregational funds;
  - support of annual audits for the congregational financial records; and
  - coordination of the offering envelope program.
- Representing needs and use of world and local mission tithes

c. Competencies

- Competent ministerial skills in representing stewardship and A Disciple's Generous Response
- Detailed knowledge of A Disciple's Generous Response
- Financial management skills
- Basic computer skills, processing contributions online under the Shelby system.

For further information contact the mission center financial officer.

13. Budgets:

Each congregation should have a budget that supports a program of ministry that is designed to achieve the mission

of the church in its area. There are annual expenses that each congregation must pay, such as insurance, utilities, and mission center support approved by the mission center conference. These expenses must be included in the congregation's budget. Next the pastors and the CFO determine what additional ministries and services will be provided based on available funding for that year. The draft budget is presented to the appropriate congregational leadership group for further consideration. The proposed budget that is developed is presented to the congregation for approval. This process should invite and encourage the general membership to review, understand, comment upon, and ultimately endorse both the program of ministry and the supporting budget for the congregation. The congregational budget is not valid unless it is approved by formal action of the congregational conference.

The CFO of a congregation is encouraged to report monthly on the status of income and expense relative to the approved budget of the congregation.

The funds of the congregation are received and disbursed according to the approved budget. Budget approval relates to approving the scope of ministries and services being funded as well as the dollar amount for those ministries and services. At times, items approved in the budget may vary in cost. The CFO is authorized to manage the bottom line of the budget, making adjustments to specific line items in the budget as necessary to account for these variations. However, if a change from the approved scope of ministries and services is necessary, either addition or deletion, then congregational approval is required. In emergency situations requiring a change in scope, the CFO shall receive approval from the pastor and/or other key congregational leaders before expending funds and then notify the congregation at the next available opportunity.

It is possible for projected income to not meet the approved budgeted expenses. If the congregation has adequate reserves then with congregational conference approval those funds can be used to meet the approved budgeted expenses. However, if there are no reserves or insufficient reserves then the CFO along with the pastor and leadership team will need to adjust the budget accordingly and then obtain congregational conference approval.

14. Recorder:

a. The congregational recorder is appointed by the mission center recorder (in consultation with the World Church recorder), functions on behalf of the Presiding Bishopric, and is supervised by the mission center financial officer. The congregational recorder, as part of the congregational leadership team, supports the pastor and is accountable to the pastor and the congregation. When the MCFO makes a change in congregational recorder, the change should be reported to the mission center recorder and the World Church recorder and should include contact information for the new recorder and the effective date of the change.

b. It is the responsibility of the congregational recorder to keep the statistical records for the congregation up to date. This would include baby blessings, baptisms, confirmations, marriages, divorces, ordinations, deaths, transfers, address changes, adoptions, and name changes. The congregational recorder should be well acquainted with the members of the congregation. The recorder should be tactful in gathering the necessary information and attend regularly in order to be aware of information that needs to be recorded.

c. The pastor and financial officer should partner with the recorder to keep changes and updates processed as quickly as possible. Members of the congregation should also keep the recorder informed of any changes that need to be made. Each congregational leadership team should develop a process that works best for them to ensure the quickest and most accurate way to keep the church's database current. Information gathered by the recorder for church purposes is confidential and should not be given out to anyone, except specific persons or groups that the pastor has approved for use in congregational work.

d. Information collected by the recorder is processed in two ways. The recorder can enter the information directly into the church's database, or they can collect the information and submit it to their mission center for entry. Corrections and updates to the records can also be made by the mission center or World Church, when necessary.

15. Historian:

The congregational historian is appointed by the World Church historian on the recommendation of the pastor and with a sustaining vote of the congregational conference. Congregational historians should submit annual historical reports for the congregation to the World Church historian's office for deposit in the church archives. Guidelines for congregational historians are available from the World Church historian's office.

16. Selection of Other Program Leaders:

Congregational program leaders should be selected approximately three months before the date they are to take office. Early selection will permit these leaders and the pastor to plan goals, objectives, ministry programs, and the calendar of activities for the ensuing year. (The positions to be filled with such officers will vary depending on local needs, but they may include church school director, music director, youth leader, etc.) The pastor should discuss leadership needs with the mission center president before the congregational conference. Congregational program leaders

are assistants to the pastor to whom they are responsible for their activities. As such they should be appointed by the pastor and sustained by the congregational conference.

17. Timeline for Officer Selection, Program Planning, and Budget Development:

While jurisdictional needs may vary, each congregation should develop a timeline for the annual process of selecting officers, planning a program of ministry, and approving an annual budget. The following items should be placed on the timeline on intervals that provide adequate time for processing and meeting notices:

a. Congregational conference selects pastor and other leaders.
b. New congregational leaders assume office.
c. Goals, objectives, and ministry programs developed.
d. Proposed congregational budget is developed.
e. Congregational conference approves budgets.

18. Term of Office:

The term of office for congregational officers should be one year. Officers continuing in service should be elected or sustained annually.

19. Ministry with Youth and Children:

It is the responsibility of the pastor to assure that all people who work with children or youth have completed the Registered Children's and Youth Worker Application Form and have completed the screening process to be a registered person to work with children and youth. Only registered children's and youth workers, and children's and youth worker assistants, may be used in church programs that work directly with children or youth. This includes such things as nursery workers, church school teachers, youth leaders, camp counselors, etc. It is desirable for all congregational leaders and priesthood to be registered youth workers. (See Part II, Section 10 for detailed information on the Registered Children's and Youth Worker application and screening process.)

20. Flexibility in Structure:

Congregations are free to develop the organizational structure that best suits their needs. They should be sure to plan ministries that reflect the breadth of congregational life and mission. Congregations may wish to appoint program leaders for worship, Christian education, caring ministries, missionary outreach, compassionate service, community development, communications, leadership development and training, and children's and youth ministry. The decision about which program leaders are needed should be based on the congregation's giftedness and the needs and opportunities for ministry in the congregation and the community.

21. Priesthood Calls:

The pastor initiates priesthood calls in congregations. However, when a family member of the pastor is involved, the mission center president should recommend priesthood calls in congregations and may also initiate calls in other special circumstances (WCR 988). All calls are initiated through the spirit of inspiration and the testimony of the life of the one being called. Calls are not to be discussed with the candidate or the membership until administrative approval is received. Public announcement can be made after the candidate has accepted the call. In cases where the call is not accepted, all information should remain confidential.

a. Calls to the Aaronic priesthood and to the office of elder shall be the responsibility of the pastor and the mission center president. In the process of consideration, it is highly recommended that administrative officers consult with other leaders such as counselors, evangelists, and financial officers. In this way the insights and views of various leaders can be helpful in the process of discerning priesthood calls. The mission center president gives final approval for these calls after clearance by the First Presidency for ministerial and personal issues. The candidate may then be contacted and the call presented to the appropriate conference (Joint Council Minutes, March 3, 1967).

b. Pastors who hold the office of priest may not initiate calls to the Melchisedec priesthood. In addition, pastors who hold the offices of deacon or teacher may not initiate calls to the priesthood. Pastors in these circumstances who discern such calls should consult with the mission center president, who may then initiate a call if prayerful discernment so indicates.

c. Ordinations should be approved by vote of the congregational conference. Legislative approval of ordinations is subject to the completion of all required preordination training. Candidates should not be ordained until they have completed all preordination requirements. Calls for those on the nonresident list should be approved by the mission center conference. When the candidate attends a different congregation than where he or she is enrolled, approval should be given by the congregation or mission center where the candidate is enrolled.

d. Forms for submitting priesthood calls are available from mission center offices (sample on pp. 88–90).

e. If a candidate declines ordination for one year, the call is withdrawn. If appropriate the call may be reprocessed at a later date.

f. Procedures for initiating priesthood calls to the high priesthood and the office of seventy are found in the section of this handbook relating to Priesthood and Ordination.

g. See Part II—Policies and Procedures for more detailed information.

22. Priesthood and Leadership Education:

The pastor is responsible for priesthood and leadership training within the congregation. The mission center president is also responsible for planning and carrying out priesthood and leadership training supplemental to those within the congregations. Additional information may be found in Part II, Section 6, "Priesthood and Ordination". For information on setting up Temple School courses, contact Temple School.

23. Houses of Worship:

All congregational building programs must receive the approval of the mission center officers as well as the approval of the field apostle and the Presiding Bishopric through Real Estate Services at World Church headquarters.

Loans for construction or development may be secured, when funds are available and requirements met, through the Presiding Bishopric from the Houses of Worship Revolving Loan Fund. Contact the Real Estate Services for specific details, rates, and other information.

24. Emerging Congregation Organization:

a. Emerging congregations are organized by the mission center president.

b. The types of emerging congregation organization may vary. All emerging congregations shall be organized with the knowledge and consent of the field apostle. The World Church secretary and the World Church recorder should be informed as these are established so that a record of the organization may be made.

c. Membership should be transferred into the emerging congregation as soon as possible. The organization is completed when all transfers are completed.

d. The pastor, mission center president, or appropriate World Church officers may initiate ordinations among emerging congregation membership. Legislative approval should be given by an appropriate conference as determined by the mission center president.

e. Emerging congregation pastors are appointed by the mission center president. The appointment should be presented to the emerging congregation conference for a sustaining vote.

25. Emerging Congregations Fiscal Procedures:

The Presiding Bishopric has created guidelines for financial accountability in emerging congregations. These guidelines are available through the MCFO or can be found at *www.CofChrist.org/cfo#PB.*

26. Group Organization:

A group is an informal association of people, not in sufficient number for congregational organization, who meet together for church purposes and with the approval of jurisdictional officers. Membership cannot be transferred to a group but must be kept on the appropriate congregational or nonresident list.

27. Congregational Names:

Except in unusual circumstances, congregations should be known by the names of the towns, cities, or sections within a city where meetings are held. Apostolic approval should be received before name changes are made (WCR 1142).

28. Disorganization of a Congregation:

a. A congregation may be disorganized when any one or a combination of the following circumstances prevail:
   - when an area within a mission center is reorganized;
   - when it is ministerially or financially unwise to maintain the congregation;
   - when leadership potential declines to the point that the mission center must provide leadership indefinitely; or
   - when a congregation is in a state of disorder.

b. The authority to disorganize rests with the field apostle after consultation with the mission center officers.

c. The field apostle should notify the World Church secretary and the World Church recorder of any organizational change.

d. All members of a congregation being disorganized should be transferred to an appropriate congregation or the nonresident list. The organization and disorganization of a congregation is accomplished when all transfer reports are recorded.

29. Financial Considerations in Closing Congregations:

a. Flexibility should be used when making financial determinations regarding the assets of a closing jurisdiction.

b. When a jurisdiction closes, any existing debt needs to be acknowledged and payment provisions agreed to before the closure is final.

c. Existing jurisdictional funding boards and their associated financial assets need to be integrated into another jurisdiction before closure is complete.

d. A final audit of the closing jurisdiction's assets should be accomplished.

e. Any funds resulting from the sale of real property will be managed in accordance with the Presiding Bishopric's "Fund Utilization Policy."

f. Determining the disposition of existing funds of the closing jurisdiction is the responsibility of that jurisdiction but should be done in collaboration with the next higher jurisdiction.

B. Mission Centers

1. Purpose:

Mission centers exist to support congregations, facilitate church expansion, and provide linkage between World Church ministries and congregations. Key functions include, but are not limited to,

- pastoral support of congregational leaders;
- leadership skill development;
- congregational consultant ministries;
- missionary ministries;
- church planting;
- congregational crisis support;
- financial resource development and support;
- specialized ministries (e.g. children, youth, young adult, singles);
- coordination of periodic celebration events (e.g. reunions, camps, conferences, etc.);
- technical assistance to congregations (e.g., legal, risk management, real estate, etc.);
- human resources; and
- essential administrative functions (e.g., implementation of World Church policies, priesthood administration, pastoral supervision, etc.).

a. Mission centers are formed by the approval of the World Church Leadership Council on the recommendation of the field apostle, with appropriate consultation.

b. A mission center president is supervised by the field apostle.

c. Mission center leaders should assist congregations to establish clear goals and objectives for ministry in the major areas of church life.

d. Mission centers have no fixed geographical boundaries. They are defined as a list of congregations composing the mission center.

e. Mission center resources should be used to develop key congregations within the mission center where opportunities for growth are discovered.

2. Selection of Mission Center President:

Mission centers are presided over by high priests or elders. Mission center presidents are appointed by the World Church through procedures established by the First Presidency. They are sustained annually by the mission center conference.

3. Duties of Mission Center President:

The mission center president is the chief administrative, pastoral, and expansion officer of the church within the mission center and is entrusted with the care and direction of the mission center's congregations through the properly constituted officers of the congregations, and of the nonresident members of the jurisdiction directly or through a nonresident pastor. Mission center presidents are set apart (see p. 34).

a. The mission center president should focus on strengthening existing congregations and helping them grow while supporting the planting of new congregations as a central part of the mission center's program of ministries.

b. A key element in the mission center president's responsibility is to work with the priesthood and leadership of each congregation to discover and recruit the best person available to serve as pastor. In congregations the pastor is elected with the right of concurrent nomination resting with the mission center president and with the members of the congregational conference. In emerging congregations the pastor is appointed by the mission center president and sustained by a vote of the emerging congregation.

c. All pastors report to the mission center president and are subject to the mission center president's supervision. They are accountable to the mission center president for the conduct of the affairs of the congregation.

d. In turn the mission center president is responsible to the field apostle for the conduct of the affairs of the mission center.

e. The mission center president should call for an audit of the mission center financial records each year.

f. At times a single person will serve as mission center president and mission center financial officer. In these cases, this individual is appointed to both roles and is responsible for the duties of each of these positions.

4. Counselors to Mission Center President:

Mission center presidents may appoint two counselors to serve as members of the mission center presidency. Those selected should be members of the Melchisedec priesthood and should be sustained by a vote of the mission center conference. Counselors serve at the pleasure of the mission center president and their tenure in office automatically ends with the resignation, death, or replacement of the mission center president. The appointment of counselors does not preclude mission center presidents from appointing other assistants, who may or may not be members of the priesthood, as they deem necessary.

5. Change of Address:

Any mission center president who moves should notify the field apostle and Human Resource Ministries. The local recorder should be contacted to make any necessary changes to the World Church membership database.

6. Mission Center Files:

Each mission center president should maintain files of the following information so they can be handed to the next mission center president to aid in continuity of administration.

a. *Mission Center Calendar*: Information on camping programs, retreats, institutes, workshops, leadership development activities, etc.

b. *Mission Center Conference Minutes and Reports*: Have available copies of mission center conference minutes, congregational financial officer's reports, and budgets as well as any recent reports from mission center committees or commissions.

c. *Annual Financial Reports from Congregations*: These reports should include operating and building fund data such as income, expenses, and yearly balance from each congregation.

d. *Information on priesthood calls* currently in process.

e. *Files related to:* priesthood silences, registered youth/children's workers, and other confidential member actions should not be kept in the mission center president's possession, but transmitted to the office of the First Presidency.

f. *Annual Congregation Audit Reports:* The mission center should maintain a copy of the completed audit for each congregation each year.

7. Relationship of Mission Center Presidents to Field Apostle:

The mission center president will report to the field apostle, as requested, regarding events taking place within the mission center, plans for the future, and progress.

8. Mission Center Conferences:

a. *General Information Concerning Conferences*: Mission center conferences are authorized to transact business relating to the work of the church within the mission center. They are subject to the bylaws and resolutions of World Conference, and to the advice of the field apostle and other World Church officers.

b. *Frequency and Scheduling of Mission Center Conferences*: Conferences should be held as often as needed to transact necessary business. At least one should be held each year unless circumstances make this practice impossible. Mission center conferences should be scheduled in coordination with the field apostle. At least four weeks notice should be given.

c. *Presiding at Mission Center Conference*: The mission center president presides over the mission center conference. If applicable, counselors may preside at the request of the mission center president or when the mission center president is absent. Members of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, or their authorized representatives preside as a courtesy or in special circumstances.

d. *Recommended Order of Proceedings*: The order recommended for a mission center conference may vary, depending on cultural circumstances. A suggested order of proceedings in the section on "Planning and Conducting Conferences" is appropriate to most settings.

e. *Special Mission Center Conferences*: Special conferences may be called by the mission center president. Care should be taken to see that those who have a right to participate have sufficient notice of time (at least four weeks), place, and business to be considered (Bylaws, Article VI, Section 6). In unusual circumstances the field apostle or other World Church officer concerned may call and preside over a conference in any of the local organizations that constitute the larger jurisdiction, subject to the confirming action of the conference when it convenes (WCR 1097).

f. *Representation at Mission Center Conference*: All members in good standing within the mission center are members of the mission center conference unless the mission center chooses to hold delegate conferences. Where delegate conferences are authorized, the mission center conference may determine the basis of representation.

- If the mission center has a delegate conference, only delegates may vote. Members should not vote in legislative meetings of mission centers in which they do not hold membership.
- In nondelegate conferences, a member who has changed his or her place of residency but whose transfer has not yet been processed may be given the right of voice and vote by action of the assembly.
- The privilege of voice in the conference's deliberations may also be extended as a courtesy to members who have special information or interest in the issue at hand. However, the giving of such a privilege is up to the assembly.

9. Mission Center Councils:

a. Mission center councils are advisory in nature and assist the mission center leaders in the development of the work of the mission center.

b. The composition of the mission center councils is determined by the mission center involved and should be broadly representative of the membership and congregations of the mission center.

c. Members of mission center councils may or may not be members of the priesthood.

d. If mission center council members are appointed and sustained, the appointing officer or entity may change the persons appointed from time to time to meet changing needs.

e. Mission center councils may give programmatic, leadership, and spiritual advice to the mission center leadership, but these councils are not administrative in nature.

f. If a mission center conference is not feasible, the mission center council may assume the necessary legislative functions of a mission center conference.

10. Bylaws:

No mission center may establish separate bylaws. The rules given in the World Church Bylaws and the procedures in the *Church Administrator's Handbook* should be followed.

11. World Conference Representation:

The number of delegates that may be elected by a mission center is determined by a formula described in World Church Bylaws, Article IV, Section 2 c. The exact number will be calculated by the Credentials Committee before each World Conference and forwarded to the mission center president. In the process of electing delegates to the World Conference, every effort should be made to assure that the mission center's delegation is representative of its membership with age, congregational membership, gender, and priesthood status being carefully considered. In electing delegates, a plurality vote is considered sufficient for election with the alternates being ranked according to the number of votes each received.

12. Mission Center Financial Officer:

Mission center financial officers (MCFOs) are appointed by the World Church through procedures established by the First Presidency and are sustained by the mission center conference. MCFOs are supervised by mission center presidents and are subject to the direction and counsel of the Presiding Bishopric for matters related to trustee responsibilities of the church. As such, the presiding bishop must be a signatory on all mission center accounts.

The Presiding Bishopric participates with the apostle in completion of the MCFO's ministerial review and development plan. The Presiding Bishopric is responsible for providing development of all MCFOs, including orientation, training/certification, and mentoring as well as continued educational opportunities.

It is traditional for MCFOs to be set apart in this role during a worship service following the sustaining action of the mission center conference. The MCFO is a member of the mission center council and may choose to have up to two counselors or, if great diversity is required, may choose to organize a finance committee to provide support and insights.

The specific duties of the mission center financial officer are summarized in the following profile. Questions may be addressed by e-mail to *mcfotraining@CofChrist.org*.

Mission Center Financial Officer Profile

a. ***Ministerial Activities***

- Teaching and preaching of stewardship
- Teaching of A Disciple's Generous Response principles (financial stewardship aspects)
- Promotion of incorporating A Disciple's Generous Response principles into members' daily lives
- Promotion of church goals through preaching, teaching, and presence in the congregations
- Providing ministry through the use of the Oblation fund
- Focal point for Aaronic minister support
- Coordination of self-sustaining bishop ministry

b. ***Financial Management***

- Responsible for mission center and congregation assets to include
  - developing and monitoring of annual conference-approved budgets;
  - timely reporting of local and world mission tithes contributions;
  - timely processing of contributor reports;
  - maintenance of contributors' addresses;
  - collecting, receipting, and accounting for all mission center funds;
  - accomplishment of annual audits for the mission center, congregations, and campground associations; and
  - signatory on all mission center, congregation, and campground association accounts.
- Representing needs and use of world and local mission tithes
- Lead for funding for mission activities
- Recruiting, appointing, training and supervising congregational financial officers
- Responsible for emerging congregation's financial activities and assets

c. ***Real Estate/Legal/Risk Management***

- Overseeing the appropriate management and maintenance of church properties to include on-site World Church representative for all building projects
- World Church representative on campground boards
- Focal point for risk management
- Overseer of youth worker registration process compliance

d. ***Records and Information Management***

- Teaching improved congregational leadership

skills through the use of ministry information

- Managing membership records for the mission center
- Recruiting, appointing, training, and supervising mission center and congregational recorders
- Responsible for mission center records retention and management

e. ***Competencies***

- Competent ministerial skills as established for World Church ministers
- Detailed knowledge of A Disciple's Generous Response
- Knowledge of the ministerial roles and responsibilities for each office of the Aaronic priesthood
- Financial management skills
- Basic computer skills for the following applications:
  - Microsoft Office products
  - Shelby General Ledger, Contributions, and Membership
- Program management skills

Required Internal Controls: Each mission center is required to establish and maintain internal control procedures that are in accordance with the guidelines established by the Presiding Bishopric. The internal control guidelines for single-line and dual-line administration are available at *www.CofChrist.org/cfo#Internal*. Each mission center shall maintain a document that details the procedures and shall submit this document to the Presiding Bishopric and field apostle for approval.

13. Budgets:

Each mission center should have a budget that supports a program of ministry designed to achieve the mission of the church in its particular area. There are annual expenses that each mission center must pay, such as insurance and basic administrative costs. These expenses must be included in the budget. Next, the mission center president and the mission center financial officer determine what additional ministries and services will be provided based on the available funding for that year. The draft budget is presented to the appropriate mission center leadership group (such as the mission center council) for further consideration. The recommended budget that is developed is presented to the mission center conference for final approval. This process should invite and encourage the general membership to review, understand, comment upon, and ultimately endorse both the program of ministry and the supporting budget for the mission center. The approval of the budget by the mission center conference constitutes a commitment on behalf of the congregations to financially support the income projection in the budget. The funds of the mission center are received and disbursed according to the approved budget.

14. Recorder:

The mission center recorder is appointed by the mission center financial officer in consultation with the mission center president and the World Church recorder and is then sustained at a mission center conference. As a representative of the World Church recorder, it is the mission center recorder's responsibility to maintain the records of the mission center as well as provide training and support to the congregational recorders. The mission center recorder is the point of entry for statistical information if the congregational recorder is not on-line with the church's database. Much of the mission center recorder's responsibilities are similar to that of a congregational recorder. Please refer to the section on the congregational recorder.

15. Historian:

The mission center historian is appointed by the World Church historian on the recommendation of the mission center president and with a sustaining vote of the mission center conference. Mission center historians should submit annual historical reports for the mission center to the World Church historian's office for depository in the church archives. Guidelines for historians are available from the historian's office.

16. Mission Center Missionary Coordinator:

The mission center missionary coordinator serves in a significant role as part of the mission center leadership team. Primary focus of this position is the missionary task with emphasis on Each One, Reach One and the witnessing dimension of the Sharing Goal. Keeping this missionary task before the congregations and leadership of the mission center is vital. Supporting the congregational missionary coordinators, missionary elders, seventies, and witnessing disciples is critical to the success of the church's mission. The primary responsibilities are as follows:

a. ***To Envision***

- Help develop and communicate effectively and passionately a strategic missionary plan to include:
  - missionary priorities
  - support/network opportunities
  - Sharing Goal
- Identify missionary opportunities including new church plants, existing congregations prepared to grow, and key issues calling for response
- Express one's personal call to leadership and discipleship

b. ***To Enlist***

- Refine the congregational missionary coordinator job description draft, modify it as appropriate, and share personally with pastor and missionary coordinator
- Develop a process for identifying and "calling"

- individuals to serve as congregational missionary coordinators
- Coordinate the role of seventies, missionary elders, and others in implementing mission center missionary plan
- Constantly be aware of persons with missionary leadership potential/gifts and help provide opportunities for their witness
- Enlist additional congregational involvement in A Witnessing Community and facilitators for implementation

c. ***To Equip***

- Identify available financial resources in support of missionary strategy
- Provide overview of current missionary resources
- Coordinate A Witnessing Community implementation
- Address the use of scripture, message, and identity in the overall missionary task
- Communicate ongoing opportunities for missionary skill development to missionary leadership at all levels
- Understand appropriate presentation skills

d. ***To Encourage***

- Provide tools for creating missionary teams
- Personally facilitate A Witnessing Community or similar strategy
- Develop healthy working relationships with other key leaders at the congregational and mission center levels
- Model self-care (ethically, spiritually, and in work/life balance)

17. Specialized Ministries:

Leaders of specialized ministries may be selected to advise in ministries with children, youth, and adults, or in such areas as Christian education, worship, communications, caring ministries, leadership development and training, missionary outreach, compassionate service, and community development. Mission center leaders may conduct workshops on the mission center level with the approval of the mission center president. They may be called for consultation by congregational leaders; however, mission center program leaders have no direct administrative connection to congregational program leaders.

a. As assistants to the mission center president, mission center leaders of specialized ministries should be appointed by the mission center president and sustained by the mission center conference. Some are program assistants to presiding officers; some involve trust relationships; and some represent World Church functions, as do historians and recorders.

b. Leaders of specialized ministries should be sustained in regular conferences rather than by any subgroup. No program area should establish prior claim to the services of certain persons when the interests of other program areas may conflict.

c. If a conference votes not to sustain an appointment, it is the responsibility of the appropriate church officials to present another person for consideration by the conference.

18. Mission Center Gatherings:

Mission center meetings or intercongregational gatherings should be cleared with the mission center president or a designated representative whose special function is to keep these in balance and pointed in a positive direction. All mission center retreats, institutes, workshops, etc., should receive the prior approval and support of the mission center presidency. Requests for scheduling of ministry external to the mission center must be done through the administrative procedures outlined in "Scheduling Personnel from Other Jurisdictions" (p. 20).

19. Clusters:

Mission centers may create clusters, groupings of congregations that may perform certain functions for mutual support and assistance. For example, pastors of congregations in a cluster may meet with the mission center president or a designee for pastoral support or to discuss issues present within one or more congregations. In mission centers where congregations are widely dispersed, clusters consisting of congregations in the same general area may find it helpful to meet together for worship or fellowship on occasion.

Clusters are optional structures that should be formed only to meet specific needs. They are not jurisdictions and do not generally have officers or budgets. They have no legislative functions. Those responsible for leading clusters do so through authority delegated from the mission center president.

20. Reports:

a. The relaying of information starts from the congregational level. Congregational officers and leaders of specialized ministries should report necessary information to the pastor.

b. The mission center president, in turn, will receive reports from the pastor. A mission center president may request reports from mission center officers and leaders of specialized ministries.

c. Reports should deal with the condition of the mission center and indicate progress being achieved, areas of

special opportunity and difficulty, and activities of special interest.

21. Priesthood and Leadership Education:

The mission center president has general supervision of all priesthood and leadership education in the mission center. Priesthood and leadership training may include both Temple School field schools and classes or workshops organized within the mission center. Training programs are under the supervision of the mission center presidency.

22. Houses of Worship:

All building programs shall receive the approval of mission center officers as well as the approval of the field apostle and the Presiding Bishopric through Real Estate Services at World Headquarters.

Loans for construction or development may be secured, when funds are available and requirements met, through the Presiding Bishopric from the Houses of Worship Revolving Loan Fund. Contact Real Estate Services for specific details, rates and other information.

C. Multi-Jurisdictional Associations

1. Multi-Jurisdictional Associations:

Groups of congregations, mission centers, or both, may be formed to achieve a specific church-related purpose in the operation and management of real property.

2. Formation:

Multi-jurisdictional associations are formed on the approval of the field apostle.

3. Bylaws:

Each multi-jurisdictional association shall be managed in accordance to bylaws. Contact Legal Services at headquarters for information about bylaws for multi-jurisdictional associations.

4. Administrative Representation:

To coordinate campgrounds and other entities with ongoing church operations, the presidents and financial officers of any mission center having congregations participating in a multijurisdictional association should be members of the board of the association.

D. Fields

1. Organization:

Fields are groupings of mission centers and are established by the First Presidency. Fields are flexible in nature, and their configuration will change periodically. The purpose of fields is to support mission centers in their efforts to support congregations and grow the church.

2. Supervision:

The First Presidency appoints members of the Council of Twelve to supervise fields.

3. Conferences:

Legislative functions are not appropriate to fields. In some circumstances, field apostles may organize nonlegislative gatherings for the purposes of training, education, or coordination.

4. Unorganized Areas:

Church activities in areas that are not clearly within an existing mission center are under the jurisdiction of the director of Field Ministries.

E. Scheduling Personnel from Other Jurisdictions

1. All requests for ministry by general officers, staff specialists, or other people from outside a mission center shall be made by the mission center president or by the pastor of a congregation with the prior approval of the mission center president.
2. The officer making the invitation should send a copy of the request to the presiding officer of the next higher administrative level.
3. Those invited to give such ministry shall clear the requests with their own supervisors before responding.
4. When clearance is obtained, the person being invited shall respond directly to the officer who made the invitation. Copies of the response should be sent to the administrative supervisor of both the invited person and the officer making the invitation.
5. Requests for ministry from outside a mission center should be coordinated with other needs and opportunities for ministry in the area concerned. Mission centers and congregations inviting personnel from other mission centers or from a World Church headquarters office should arrange to cover travel costs.
6. General officers may initiate such ministry by following the clearance and notification procedures indicated above.
7. Mission centers may establish their own procedures for congregations requesting ministry from within the mission center.

3. Quorums and Orders

A. First Presidency

The function of presidency provides presiding, coordinating, and facilitating leadership. Such presidency relates to the several offices of the Melchisedec and Aaronic priesthoods (D. and C. 104:11a). Nonpriestly or nonecclesiastical functions, such as associations, committees, etc., also require a presiding function. Because of the variety of functions in the church, presidency is also expressed in a variety of forms. Administrative presidency is traced from the "three presiding high priests" of the Melchisedec order who make up the "quorum of the Presidency of the church" (D. and C. 104:11b), through the Quorum of Twelve Apostles (D. and C 104:11e) to the presiding officers of various field jurisdictions.

Administrative presidency provides structure and continuity. It manages the body through planning, consultation, assignment of responsibilities, presiding over legislative sessions, scheduling of activities, and general coordination of all the agencies that are directly involved in the institutional structure.

Due to its wide range of ministries, the church engages in a variety of functions and requires specialists who relate to each other and to the general administrative structure. This pattern of relationships is sometimes described in "line" and "staff" terms. Staff functions are provided through assistants to the quorums and councils (D. and C. 104:11, 31, 38-41), associations (D. and C. 128:6), and institutions (D. and C. 127). The need for such agencies to enrich the church's ministries was recognized in the New Testament era when Paul referred to "helps" and "governments" in the church (I Corinthians 12:28).

Administrative direction of the various activities of an organized unit of the church is the responsibility of the presidency of that jurisdiction (mission center president and pastor).

The First Presidency may be contacted by e-mail at *fp@CofChrist.org*.

1. The First Presidency is the chief administrative quorum of the church and functions in this capacity on major policy matters with individual members of the Presidency responsible for the administration of specific areas.
    a. Major policy issues require consideration of different points of view. For this reason collective decision making is advisable. The members of the First Presidency identify policy issues and develop policy recommendations within their areas of responsibility, and these recommendations are given consideration by the First Presidency as a quorum.
    b. Because broad consultation is consistent with the democratic nature and tradition of the church, the First Presidency considers it advisable to consult, when appropriate, with committees, consultants, and professional people in many fields. Decision making by the First Presidency is usually achieved by consensus. The First Presidency refers certain matters to other quorums for consideration or to the World Church Leadership Council for counsel and advice and in some cases for formal decision by vote.
    c. All major decisions of the First Presidency have either the explicit approval of the president or the implicit approval of the president through assignment of the counselors to their respective roles.
    d. In certain matters decisions are made with the counselors serving as advisors to the president but with decision-making responsibility resting with the president alone.
2. The president of the church has individual responsibility for guiding the church through inspired counsel. Through the two counselors and those responsible to them the president gives guidance to and coordinates the missionary and administrative functions of the church. The president also promotes appropriate external relationships. The First Presidency presents formal policy, program recommendations, and budgetary proposals to the World Church Finance Board, World Church Leadership Council, and World Conference for review and action. The First Presidency is responsible for ensuring that an annual audit of the World Church finances is accomplished. By assigning counselors in the First Presidency to oversee major areas of operation the president is free to focus attention on overall coordination and other elements of churchwide ministry.
3. Members of the First Presidency agree to assume on an individual basis responsibilities for general administrative relationships with the Council of Twelve, the presiding evangelist, and the Presiding Bishopric and for supervision of the other major areas of church management and operations.
4. The resource and program functions of World Church headquarters are organized under the general direction of the First Presidency under the leadership of individuals appointed by the First Presidency. Those responsible for major resource and program functions report on a regular basis through the appropriate administrator to the designated member of the Presidency. This method promotes continuity in the pursuit of objectives and establishes clear accountability for the daily activities in these areas of church operations.

In matters of policy the members of the First Presidency working with those in charge of specific areas of church life develop recommendations for the quorum of the First Presidency to consider. The First Presidency then either decides the policy questions or, as required, presents it to the appropriate quorum or council for advice and action.

Regular and frequent communication provides an opportunity for the free flow of information and points of view among the First Presidency, the Council of Twelve, the presiding evangelist, the Presiding Bishopric, and the headquarters functions. The personnel of these offices are part of the First Presidency's staff. Information about World Church headquarters offices may be found on the church's Web site (*http://CofChrist.org*).

B. Council of Twelve

1. The Council of Twelve is the chief missionary quorum of the church.

2. The president of the Council of Twelve Apostles is elected by the council and presides over council sessions. The president reports to the First Presidency.

3. The director of Field Ministries is appointed by the First Presidency to supervise the apostles in their field assignments and may or may not be the president of the Council of Twelve. The director of Field Ministries reports to the designated member of the First Presidency and directs, coordinates, and supervises the field jurisdictions of the church. Based on the goals and objectives stated by the First Presidency, the director of Field Ministries establishes the goals and objectives to be accomplished in the field.

Preliminary consideration is given to the budget required to support these goals and objectives. When they have been approved by the First Presidency, and the supporting budget has been adopted by the World Church Finance Board, the director of Field Ministries is then responsible for coordinating the program with that portion of the budget that relates to field administration. The director of Field Ministries and the apostles also serve as a primary channel of communication between World Church headquarters and the field.

4. Apostolic Duties and Assignments:
   a. Apostles supervise the administrative line of the church in the field. Mission center presidents report directly to the apostles assigned to their jurisdictions.

   b. For the development and implementation of ministries in the areas to which they are assigned, the apostles work with mission center presidents and mission center financial officers to develop appropriate common approaches to the church's ministries. Their assignments cover the entire field of church ministry throughout the world.

   c. In the event that individual apostles are assigned to other special ministries not directly related to field administration, they are nevertheless closely related to field activities. They have access to the field by arrangement with the appropriate field administrators and in harmony with needs recognized in consultation with the director of Field Ministries and the supervising apostles concerned. This arrangement provides channels of communication between headquarters functions and church ministries in the field.

   d. Apostles assigned to field jurisdictions are responsible for the total development of the church in their respective areas. Further, they consult with administrative and financial officers in their areas as they work to develop objectives, programs, ministries, and budgets. Apostles report to the director of Field Ministries the annual and long-range goals and objectives for their fields. Progress is also reported periodically at meetings of the Council of Twelve and of the World Church Leadership Council.

   e. The Council of Twelve, as the chief missionary quorum of the church, also functions as a whole to develop the comprehensive plans and strategies that implement the goals and objectives developed by the First Presidency in relation to the church's missionary ministries. In this process, the headquarters divisions and centers assist in planning and providing resources. Such coordination by the Council of Twelve facilitates consistency and continuity in local planning. The content of local ministries, however, is not specified by the director of Field Ministries or by the individual apostle. Each jurisdiction develops its own ministries under the guidance of presiding administrative and financial ministers in relation to general goals and objectives.

   f. The Council of Twelve may be contacted by e-mail at *apostles@CofChrist.org*.

C. Presiding Bishopric

The presiding bishop and counselors are known as the Presiding Bishopric (WCR 710). Article III, Section 5c of the Community of Christ Bylaws identify the Presiding Bishopric as the chief financial officers and trustees of the church, responsible for the administration of the temporal affairs of the whole church.

Members of the Presiding Bishopric share the duty of leading the Order of Bishops, providing support and mentoring to financial officers at the mission center level, as well as collaboration and guidance for self-sustaining bishops.

The members of the Presiding Bishopric are the presiding officers of the Aaronic priesthood and lead the Order of Bishops in providing support, training, and advocacy in empowering Aaronic ministers to respond to their call of ministry.

The members of the Presiding Bishopric also serve as judges in church court proceedings. Bishops in mission centers have similar duties within their local jurisdiction as standing courts of the church when so appointed by the First Presidency.

The Presiding Bishopric may be contacted by e-mail at *prebish@CofChrist.org*.

In 1972, the First Presidency and Presiding Bishopric developed the following responsibilities for the Presiding Bishopric (these have been adapted over time due to changes in organizational structure of the church):

Responsibilities of the Presiding Bishopric:

1. The Presiding Bishopric function as the chief financial officers and trustees of the church and are responsible for the administration of the temporal affairs of the World Church.
    a. They work under the general direction of the First Presidency in carrying out the functions of their office provided in Restoration scriptures and in accordance with World Conference enactments and in harmony with the various trusteeship responsibilities, which are inherent in the office. They are responsible to and report to both the First Presidency and the World Conference.

    b. They are responsible for managing the temporal affairs of the church in order to best serve the overall program of the church.

    c. The World Church Financial Policy (WCR 1264) provides guidance and direction to the Presiding Bishopric. They make recommendations on temporal matters to the First Presidency, the World Church Leadership Council, the Order of Bishops, the World Church Finance Board, the Stewardship Foundation, and the World Conference, as needed. They have responsibility to relate church resources and anticipated income to the long-range programming as planned and carried out under the administrative direction of the First Presidency.

    d. They have leadership responsibility, in conjunction with the World Church Leadership Council, to raise and gather funds for budgetary, capital, and other program needs of the World Church.

    e. They have responsibility in caring for and investing World Church funds. The First Presidency shall be informed of investments either by means of the regular accounting statements or by special reports. Long-term investments will be made which may promote the program of the church in consultation with the First Presidency.

    f. They have responsibility for disbursing the general and special funds of the church in conformity with donors' restrictions, conference enactments, accepted accounting practices, and specific policies which apply. In doing this they monitor the entire budget of the World Church. If emergencies arise for which funds have not been allocated, or budgets for any reason are found to be unworkable, they will consult with the First Presidency before budgetary revisions or other financial adjustments are made. If major adjustments are necessary in the opinion of the Presiding Bishopric they may recommend to the First Presidency the convening of the World Church Finance Board.

    g. The director of Field Ministries, in conjunction with the Presiding Bishopric, makes recommendations to the World Church Human Resource Committee regarding the assignments of mission center financial officers. They also have responsibility for the orientation, training, and mentoring of mission center financial officers. The mission center financial officers are agents of the Presiding Bishopric in the field. That responsibility is extended by the mission center financial officers appointment of congregational financial officers to serve in congregations.

    h. They have responsibilities as chief financial officers and trustees in trust for the World Church "in every place in the world" where the church is established. As general officers they are free to contact and be contacted by local jurisdictional officers in the field. Requests for field ministry of the Presiding Bishopric or their staff should be made through the jurisdictional administrative officer in the field. They keep in touch with the field through reports as well as visits into the field in consultation with the administrative officers concerned.

2. While the opening of missions in new nations is a primary responsibility of the Council of Twelve, the Presiding Bishopric will be kept informed and should be represented when practicable in the group making a survey trip to secure firsthand information about the mission under consideration or to determine whether such mission opening should be made.

3. The Presiding Bishopric holds title to church properties and its three members are held responsible to

the World Church or to the other jurisdictions of the church for whose use and benefit the property is held. As trustees in trust they are legally responsible to the World Conference for all the financial assets of the World Church. It is recognized that they will use discretionary judgment in the management of the temporal resources of the church as they fulfill the requirements of the fiduciary relationship.

4. The Presiding Bishopric presides over the Order of Bishops and provides nurture and support to the bishops of the church. They have the responsibility of calling them together for meeting as needs demand. The Order of Bishops as well as the Presiding Bishopric may initiate legislation for presentation to the First Presidency and World Conference. The Order of Bishops also provides advice and counsel to the Presiding Bishopric.

5. The Presiding Bishopric presides over the Aaronic priesthood and carries on such educational or other activities as are agreed upon in consultation with the First Presidency.

D. World Church Leadership Council

The World Church Leadership Council is composed of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, Presiding Bishopric, and other key leaders of the church. It meets several times a year to consider critical strategic issues facing the church and to make decisions on fundamental matters of implementation.

E. Standing High Council

The Standing High Council meets at the request of the First Presidency to consider questions of moral and ethical significance, to provide general advice and counsel to the First Presidency, and to consider appeals from courts of field jurisdictions. The Standing High Council may also advise the Presiding Bishopric when requested by the First Presidency.

F. Orders of the High Priesthood

Members of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, Presiding Bishopric, and Standing High Council are high priests. The high priesthood also includes the Order of Evangelists, Order of Bishops, and the general Quorum of High Priests.

1. The Order of Evangelists:

This order is made up of experienced ministers proactively offering ministries of blessing and integration to individuals and the congregations of the church. The Order of Evangelists is presided over by the presiding evangelist.

a. The presiding evangelist:
   - gives leadership in the training of members of the order in their personal ministry in the office;
   - presides over the meetings of the order for educational purposes and when considering matters of interest to the order as a whole (e.g., the approval of documents of inspired counsel at World Conference):
   - gives ministry throughout the church under the general guidance of the First Presidency; and
   - and is available for ministry to the general officers of the church.

b. The presiding evangelist's office is the repository of evangelist's blessings, copies of which are available to individuals who have lost their original copies.

c. The Order of Evangelists may initiate legislation for presentation to the World Conference.

2. The Order of Bishops:

This order is led by the Presiding Bishopric.

a. The mission of the order is to nurture and support the ministry of the bishop. To carry out this responsibility, the order convenes as needed, to educate and discuss such topics as generosity, stewardship, A Disciple's Generous Response, and Aaronic priesthood.

b. When the order meets, it provides opportunities for spiritual formation and fellowship. The order advises the Presiding Bishopric on areas of policies, procedures, and resources. It also provides comment and recommendations to the World Conference on inspired documents and can submit legislation.

3. The Quorum of High Priests:

In the larger sense this quorum includes all high priests. Because some are members of specific orders, however, those not in such orders are under the quorum leadership of a presidency of the Quorum of High Priests.

a. The president is appointed by the First Presidency, subject to approval by the quorum and the World Conference. The counselors are selected by the president of the quorum with the approval of the First Presidency and the quorum. Both the president and the counselors are set apart by the laying on of hands.

b. Quorum functions include the education and training of members. The principal source of this education is the Temple School.

c. The Quorum of High Priests may initiate legislation for presentation to the World Conference.

G. Quorums of Seventy

The Seventy share with the apostles responsibility as special witnesses of Jesus Christ.

1. The Council of Presidents of Seventy is composed of up to seven members selected from among the members of the Quorums of Seventy. They are called by the Council of Presidents of Seventy and approved by the World Church Leadership Council and the World Conference.
    a. Individual quorum presidents are selected by the Council of Presidents of Seventy and sustained by action of the quorums.
    b. When gathered in a formal quorum session each quorum is under the leadership of its own president.
    c. In mass meetings of the Seventy the senior president presides, unless the body provides otherwise.
    d. When the office of senior president of Seventy is vacant, or when a vacancy is imminent, the Council of Presidents of Seventy recommends one of its members to serve as senior president. Upon approval by the World Church Leadership Council, this recommendation is presented to the World Conference for legislative approval.

2. Seventies are assigned to functions of evangelistic outreach and administration.
    a. A member of the Seventy may be made available to serve as an administrative officer, particularly when a new opening for the church is under development or where there are special needs related to the seventy's calling and gifts.
    b. A member of the Seventy who is assigned to a jurisdiction and is not the presiding officer works under the supervision of the presiding officer concerned.

3. As one of the quorums having churchwide ministerial functions, the Seventy participate with the First Presidency and the Council of Twelve in certain interquorum decisions (D. and C. 104:11-13, 122:10, 126:10).

4. The Quorums of Seventy may initiate legislation for presentation to the World Conference.

H. Elders

1. Elders are concerned with personal and corporate growth, and with the long-term implications of the Christian life. Except for the specialized responsibilities of World Church quorums and orders, elders may administer all of the basic functions of the church (D. and C. 104:6).
    a. Elders may function in administrative roles such as congregational pastors when chosen by the vote of the people (D. and C. 120:2).
    b. They may preside over meetings and worship services (D. and C. 17:9) and participate in administering the ordinances of the church, including baptism, the laying on of hands to confirm those baptized, the blessing of children, administration to the sick, the Lord's Supper, ordination, and marriage. These ordinances mark new possibilities and call for new maturity. They symbolize God's continuing care and concern for humanity and call for support of the body of the church. These ordinances require a significant maturity on the part of the elder.
    c. Elders may serve as counselors to mission center financial officers (D. and C. 42:8c).
    d. Special courts are appointed from among the elders as a standing court when no bishop is available (D. and C. 42:22a-d).

2. Elders are "spiritual" ministers. They seek to demonstrate and advocate a quality of life that gives depth, meaning, and cohesiveness to the life of each person and of the church.

3. A "mass meeting" of elders who are delegates to the World Conference may initiate legislation for presentation to the Conference.

I. Aaronic Priesthood

The Aaronic priesthood consists of three offices—deacon, teacher, and priest—to which individuals are called and ordained. The Presiding Bishopric presides over the Aaronic priesthood and is responsible for its education and training.

1. **Ministry of Presence:** Each Aaronic priesthood office has certain distinctive areas of ministry. All of them, however, provide the same vital ministry—the *ministry of presence.* Aaronic priesthood members are called to serve others as Jesus served us. Just as Jesus was present in the world, deacons, teachers, and priests should be in our congregations and the communities where they are located. Just as Jesus showed and encouraged us to live faithfully toward God and peaceably with others, deacons, teachers, and priests should nurture individuals and families in their Christian faith and action. Just as Jesus worked to bring the kingdom of God to earth, deacons, teachers, and priests should strive to strengthen it by becoming involved in programs, activities, organizations, and the like that improve the conditions of daily life in their cities, towns, villages, neighborhoods, and places of work.

2. **The deacon** is responsible for the care of the church facility, making it inviting and a comfortable environment for worship and fellowship. This ministry of hospitality should make people feel welcome and appreciated. The deacon also cares for members and friends of the church relating to the temporal

aspects of life. This ministry includes being aware of and sensitive to people's physical and spiritual health and financial needs. They teach about stewardship as response to Christ's ministry and they teach the principles of A Disciple's Generous Response.

3. **The teacher** is a peacemaker and one whose empathy lends strength to members and friends of the church through understanding and service. The key attribute of a teacher is the ability to cultivate friendships and know the circumstances of the families in the congregation. The teacher is also a shepherd, one who closely associates with the flock and recognizes the life problems that the members face every day. The teacher's relationship to the membership is one of love and concern, especially for those who have need for personal spiritual support. Teachers will visit the members in their homes and at other places as is reasonable and needful. The teacher will cultivate close contact with the members and sense when members have needs beyond the teacher's ability to support. This information should be communicated to an appropriate congregational leader. These persons may be referred for professional help.

4. **The priest** preaches the gospel of Christ, visits members in their homes, encourages them to pray vocally and in secret, and to attend to their family duties. Priests share with the elder in the responsibility of explaining all things concerning the church to those who have been baptized, but not yet confirmed. They may administer the sacraments of baptism in water, the Lord's Supper, marriage, and the ordination of members of the Aaronic priesthood. In all of their ministry they may expect the direction of the Holy Spirit.

5. **Ministerial Support and Administrative Direction:** Ministerial support of Aaronic priesthood in the mission center is provided by one or more bishops in that jurisdiction. Administrative direction of Aaronic priesthood ministry is typically provided by the congregational presiding officer. The ministerial plan for an Aaronic priesthood member is based on the needs of the congregation and community matched with the gifts and skills of that Aaronic minister and developed in conjunction with the congregational presiding officer.

6. **A "mass meeting" of the Aaronic priesthood** who are delegates to the World Conference may initiate legislation for presentation to the Conference as the rules allow.

Part II—Policies and Procedures

4. Priesthood and Ordination

A. The Nature of Priesthood

Priesthood ministry within the church is thoroughly discussed in *The Priesthood Manual* (Herald House, 2004). It is a valuable reference for study of the history, theology, and functioning of priesthood. Certain procedural matters are refined from time to time. This edition of the *Church Administrator's Handbook* has precedence over previous editions and other previously published guidelines.

B. Calls to the Priesthood

Calls to the priesthood are initiated by jurisdictional officers in response to the spirit of discernment, wisdom, and divine direction and are authorized by a vote of the members in a conference of the appropriate church jurisdiction.

1. Calls to the office of high priest may be initiated by the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, and mission center presidents holding the office of high priest. All such calls must have the approval of the field apostle, the director of Field Ministries, the Council of Twelve, and the First Presidency before being submitted to the individual and the conference. Calls to the office of bishop are initiated by the First Presidency and are approved by the World Church Leadership Council. Calls to the office of evangelist are initiated through the Council of Twelve and approved by the First Presidency and the Council of Twelve. Seventies are called through the Council of Presidents of Seventy and approved by the First Presidency and World Church Leadership Council.

2. Procedures for processing calls to the priesthood in congregations are outlined on page 91.

3. Forms for recommending ordinations to the office of elder, priest, teacher, and deacon are available from mission center offices (see appendix). This form, or a photocopy of it, should be used in the processing of all priesthood calls. Older forms are now obsolete and should be discarded. Mission centers may also use additional forms to supplement those distributed by the World Church.

4. Those responsible for calling persons to priesthood office are encouraged to engage in prayerful reflection on the needs of the church for ministry, the movement of the Holy Spirit in the lives of potential candidates, and the ministerial gifts, talents, and commitment those potential candidates express in their lives. Calling officers are also encouraged to consult with other experienced ministers who can be trusted with the confidentiality required by such discussions.

C. Preordination Expectations

1. Calling and Ordination:

A significant distinction exists between calling and ordination. Calling reflects the personal relationship between God and the person. Ordination is provided for when that calling is perceived by an appropriate administrative officer, is approved through designated channels, and is symbolized by the laying on of hands. Ordination provides formal authority to function within a specific priesthood office in the church. Acceptance of ordination implies a willingness to minister within a framework of expectations and standards developed by the church as a way of enriching priesthood ministry.

2. Financial Stewardship of Ordinands:

Church officers responsible for initiating priesthood calls are urged to give earnest consideration to each candidate's attitude toward financial stewardship principles along with other aspects of the gospel. Ideally, a candidate for ordination would contribute mission tithes in a balanced way, both local and to World Church purposes. Additionally, calling officers should carefully consider indications of poor personal financial management, such as apparent misuse of credit or indications of spending beyond one's means.

3. Legislative Approval:

All priesthood calls are to be submitted to a legislative conference, at the appropriate jurisdictional level, for approval (D. and C. 17:16). The purpose of this legislative approval is to allow the members of the church to express their willingness to accept the ministry to be offered by the candidate. Calls to the Aaronic priesthood and to the office of elder are approved by a congregational conference or by a mission center conference. Calls to the offices of seventy and high priest as well as to any of the specialized ministries which are part of the ministry of high priest (i.e., evangelist, bishop, etc.) are approved by a mission center conference or by the World Conference.

4. Training:

Before ordination, a candidate is expected to complete the Temple School courses SL 101 Introduction to Caring Ministries, SS 101 Introduction to Understanding Scripture or equivalent, and the course designed for the specific

priesthood office. After the first call to priesthood, SL 101 Introduction to Caring Ministries need not be repeated for subsequent calls, but a scripture course and an office-centered course should be taken each time. Where appropriate, an administrative officer may certify course equivalency for individuals who have met the basic requirements in other ways.

5. Designation and Candidacy:

A period of preparation exists between the time of administrative approval authorizing a call and when ordination takes place. This category of designation and candidacy for priesthood should not last more than one year; approval after that time is no longer valid unless extenuating circumstances are present. During this time a person is seen as having been called to service but not yet fully authorized by the church. This time will serve as a period of personal preparation, testimony, and guided practical experience.

D. Ordination

The sacrament of ordination is normally performed by two or more members of the priesthood authorized to ordain people to a specific office. Local circumstances may dictate that an ordination be performed by a single officiant, especially in areas where the church is still developing. The ordaining priesthood are chosen in consultation between the ordinand and the administrative officers.

High priests, elders, or priests may officiate in the ordination of Aaronic priesthood, and high priests and elders for the ordination of elders. High priests may be ordained by other high priests, including bishops and evangelists. Evangelists are normally ordained by members of the First Presidency or Council of Twelve, and bishops are ordained by members of the First Presidency or their designee, with any high priest eligible to assist in the ordination of either. Seventies are normally ordained by a member of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, or presidents of Seventy, with any other high priest or seventy assisting.

Priesthood Licenses:

When ordinations have been performed they should immediately be reported to the Office of Membership Records by the congregational or mission center recorder. Once the ordination has been recorded, the World Church secretary will issue a priesthood license, which certifies the individual as an ordained minister. (In parts of the world where this procedure is impractical, the field apostle will establish an appropriate procedure to document the ordination of ministers.) This license should be surrendered when a priesthood member is silenced or released. Whether surrendered or not, the license is valid only when the priesthood member is authorized by the church to function. Licenses which have been lost or damaged, may be replaced by sending a written request to the World Church secretary.

E. Priesthood Accountability

Priesthood is of a continuing nature. Priesthood authority is granted by the church as a privilege, with continuing expectations. One is called to enlarge and expand personal gifts in the process of ministry—in brief, to magnify one's calling. In recognition of these factors, continuing education and accountability for one's ministry are accepted by each ordinand as essential to fulfilling the call of God.

1. Personal Review:

Each member of the priesthood should review his or her own ministry and calling on a periodic basis. Such a review might include questions relating to areas of particular ministerial interest, needs for further development, and the degree of satisfaction in one's office and calling. Members of the priesthood have a right to discuss the issues involved in such a review with the pastor or the pastor's designee.

2. Administrative Review:

A pastor, or other administrative officer who supervises members of the priesthood, may initiate a similar discussion with a priesthood member as circumstances may suggest.

3. Change of Status:

If a personal or administrative review of a member of the priesthood suggests that a change of status is in order, the change of status should be reported in accordance with established procedures. (See below.)

4. Continuing Education:

Following ordination, individuals holding priesthood office are expected to be involved in the process of continuing education. At least two continuing education units (CEU—equivalent to two ten-hour Temple School courses, or two full-weekend workshops, or one four-day seminar or workshop) are considered normal expectations for each year. Temple School coordinators are available for consultation in regard to educational concerns and needs.

F. Priesthood Categories

In an effort to better classify the ways individual priesthood members are able to function, several categories of priesthood service have been defined.

1. Active:

This category describes the large body of priesthood members who provide ministry appropriate to their abilities, life's circumstances, and the congregation or other jurisdiction to which they are responsible. Continuing active status is the objective for all priesthood members.

2. Inactive:

The inactive priesthood status recognizes that personal and/or situational conditions may determine that the priesthood member cannot actively function in the office and calling for an indefinite period of time. Inactive status recognizes that there is no breach of the church's ethical or moral expectations for the personal conduct of priesthood members. This category carries no negative connotation on the person's church record. If there is cause for silence, the person will not be placed on inactive status.

a. The inactive priesthood status will usually be agreed between a priesthood member and the pastor or other supervising officer, and it may be requested at any time. Inactive priesthood members may retain their cards and may function in the office, including the performance of ordinances, with the permission of the pastor. Periodic interim reviews should be held to encourage return to active status.

b. If a priesthood member disagrees with the status her or she has been assigned, the decision can be appealed through the administrative line.

c. A priesthood member on inactive status may be reinstated to active status on approval of the pastor. When reinstatement is granted, the Office of Membership Records should be notified immediately.

3. Superannuation:

Superannuation is an honor in recognition of long and faithful service. Superannuation continues the authority to administer the sacraments pertaining to the office. However, such participation becomes permissive and voluntary. This honor is appropriate when permanent or long-term limitations prohibit one's full functioning in priesthood office. Such limitations may be related to age, increasing degrees of infirmity, or disabling conditions.

a. At any time, either the priesthood member or the supervising administrative officer may suggest superannuation.

b. When superannuation is agreed to by the priesthood member and the supervising officer, the procedure for approval depends on the office held. For members of the Aaronic priesthood and for elders, the request is transmitted to the mission center president and the field apostle. The field apostle informs the administrative officers and the Office of Membership Records of the final approval of superannuation. The Office of Membership Records will forward a certificate of superannuation to the mission center president.

c. For priesthood members serving in World Church quorums and orders (high priests, evangelists, bishops, and seventies) the request passes through the administrative line as above, but is also reviewed by the director of Field Ministries and the First Presidency, in consultation with the quorum or order officer concerned. When these approvals have been received, the First Presidency informs all appropriate administrative officers and the Office of Membership Records of the final approval of the superannuation. The Office of Membership Records will forward a certificate of superannuation to the mission center president.

d. In all cases, the superannuation is effective on the date of the final administrative approval.

e. In most cases, it would be appropriate and fitting to present a superannuated minister with his or her certificate of superannuation at an appropriate gathering such as a mission center conference.

4. Release:

A member may choose to be released from the responsibility of priesthood for reasons of life's circumstances or personal conscience. All persons released from the priesthood should relinquish their priesthood license. Their status is the same as an unordained member.

a. *Voluntary Release.* Voluntary release is usually initiated by the priesthood member but may be suggested by the pastor or other administrative officer. The priesthood member should submit to the pastor a signed statement requesting release and enclose the priesthood card. The pastor should ensure that it is a mature decision, not prompted by the possibility of silence, and that there is no likelihood the individual will serve in that office in the foreseeable future. The pastor then prepares a letter endorsing the action and forwards all the material to the First Presidency, with a copy to the mission center president. This procedure was previously known as "voluntary silence," but the term "silence" is now used only in connection with disciplinary action for cause.

b. *Involuntary Release.* Involuntary release may be imposed for the following reasons: (1) three years' inactivity without evidence of any desire to return to active priesthood service; (2) the expressed or obvious intent of a priesthood member to be inactive indefinitely, even if release is not specifically requested; (3) active membership or participation in another church or religious group, without participation in the Community of Christ; (4) transfer to the nonaffiliated rolls; (5) placement on the unknown rolls for a period of three years.

c. *Procedures for Involuntary Release.* When involuntary release is initiated by a pastor, a letter should be written informing the priesthood member of the action that has been taken. This letter should be patterned after the following format, although it may be adapted as necessary:

[*date*]
[*name and address of priesthood member*]

Dear [*name of priesthood member*]:

In accordance with the policies of the church, I am obligated to release you from the priesthood office of [*office*]. I am taking this action because [*state grounds*]. You have been informed of the possibility of this step on previous occasions.

Release from the priesthood means that you no longer carry the privileges and responsibilities of your priesthood office. Please send me your priesthood license so that I can return it to the First Presidency. This action does not affect your membership status, and there is no sanction against you.

If you feel this action is unwarranted you have sixty days to appeal this decision to [*name and address of next higher administrative officer*].

More importantly, I would be most happy to talk with you if there is any way that I can assist you in returning to active participation in the life of the church. Reinstatement to your former office can be discussed on your request should you decide to return to active priesthood service.

Sincerely yours,
[*name and jurisdiction*]

cc: The First Presidency
mission center president
field apostle

A copy of this letter must be sent to the First Presidency so the release can be noted on the official records. As noted, this action may be appealed through the administrative line in the same manner as a silence.

d. *Reinstatement of Released Ministers.* A person who has been released from the priesthood may be reinstated to any office previously held. Initiation of such requests comes from the released person or from the pastor, after determining the commitment and personal stability of the individual and the acceptability of his or her ministry. The pastor discusses this step with the mission center president and then requests the First Presidency to provide information from the file, including a list of offices previously held. With this information in hand, the pastor meets with the individual to determine if there is a willingness to accept a return to priesthood responsibility and to a specific office. The released priesthood member and the pastor both write letters requesting reinstatement and enclosing all pertinent information. These are forwarded to the mission center president and transmitted through the administrative line for approval at each level. When the First Presidency takes favorable action, a new license is issued and sent to the mission center president for delivery to the member. The minister is not reordained.

e. *New Calls for Released Ministers.* If a call to an office never held by the released priesthood member is in prospect, it should be handled exactly the same way that a new call for any other person is processed. Administrative reinstatement is not appropriate in this case.

f. *Release to Serve in a Different Office.* A priesthood member may request release for the purpose of serving in an office previously held but with a more narrow scope of responsibility than the one currently occupied. (For example, an elder may request release to accept the role of ministry in the office of priest, teacher, or deacon, if he or she has previously been ordained to those offices.) Such a request normally is initiated by the priesthood member, although it could occasionally be sensitively raised by the pastor or mission center president. Administratively, such requests are handled as a release from one office and reinstatement to a previous office and require the same approvals as any reinstatement.

5. Suspension:

The category of suspension is provided for those personal circumstances that may adversely affect an individual's ministry or make it unacceptable to a congregation. Divorce proceedings and other legal difficulties, such as criminal charges or bankruptcy, are illustrations of when suspension may be appropriate. This action is helpful to both the individual and the church in that the individual is not asked to offer ministry when in spiritual turmoil or during personal legal proceedings. No assumptions are made about guilt or innocence until the proceedings are concluded. It also protects the church because negative allegations, which are often made in such proceedings, could reflect adversely on the church.

It is premature to officially suspend a priesthood member just because the person is in marital counseling or having marital problems. A pastor should be alert and use the priesthood member's ministries with discretion if there are difficult circumstances, but suspension would be premature. Official suspension should be imposed at the time one of the parties has actually filed for divorce. Legal separation or other legally recognized initiation of the termination of marriage may be used to determine when to suspend.

The pastor, or other administrator acting to suspend, should write a letter advising the priesthood member of the suspension, clearly giving the reasons for suspension, and noting the specific time the suspension will be terminated. The end of the suspension period should be specified, either by date or at the outcome of certain proceedings. This letter may be patterned after the following model:

Dear [*name of priesthood member*]:

I have learned that you have [*filed for divorce, filed for bankruptcy, been charged with criminal action*]. Church procedures require that I suspend you from all priesthood activity while legal actions are in process. You will be suspended until [*date, or proceedings are complete, rulings are made and the matter is not appealed*].

By this action the church is not making any judgments about your guilt or innocence. Priesthood members in your circumstance are suspended automatically without prejudice, and we trust that the freedom from obligation to provide ministry to others will allow you to give full attention to your personal concerns.

At the conclusion of the suspension period, we will need to review your situation to determine the future course of your ministry.

Sincerely,
[*name and jurisdiction of pastor*]

cc: mission center president

During the suspension period the priesthood member refrains from functioning but keeps his or her priesthood license. A minister who continues to act in a ministerial capacity while under suspension is in "willful disregard of the properly exercised authority of a supervising administrative officer' and therefore subject to possible silence.

In a timely fashion the circumstances causing the suspension should be reviewed with the priesthood member under suspension. If the cause has been removed, all actions are completed and no continuing negative consequences are apparent, the suspension should be lifted. The lifting should be communicated by letter with copies to all those given copies in previous correspondence.

If the proceedings have resulted in a loss of the capacity to minister by reason of proven moral turpitude, conviction of a felony, misuse or abuse of priesthood privileges, or other disregard for the standards of Christian conduct, the priesthood member should be placed under silence.

Suspension is, in general, not subject to appeal because it is normally temporary and has a stated termination time. However, if the suspended priesthood member feels it has been misapplied, he or she may appeal to the next higher administrative officer on the grounds of misapplication of suspension. Examples of such misapplication are: failure to give written notice, divorce proceedings have not been filed, or no termination of suspension is specified.

6. Silence:

The silencing of priesthood members is an administrative procedure by which authority to represent the church as an ordained minister is withdrawn. Silence is for cause and usually involves need for frequent and specialized ministry. Silenced members are required to relinquish their priesthood license and may not function as priesthood members. Silencing is an administrative action that does not affect membership status and is not within the jurisdiction of the civil or church courts.

a. *Ministerial Standards.* Ministers are charged with the personal responsibility of maintaining the highest standards of Christian conduct. This would require that the minister maintain a good reputation, especially with respect to prompt payment of financial obligations, propriety of social behavior, and a positive attitude toward the church institution and its members, avoiding extreme positions of a critical and disruptive nature. In actions of silence for unchristian conduct, the administrative officer should be precise in the identification of the particular act of unchristian conduct and state specifically how or why the behavior is unchristian.

b. *Grounds for Silence.* Grounds for silencing may include but not be limited to any one or more of the following (WCR 1192, adopted April 11, 1986):

- Conviction of a felony or other serious crime. A serious crime shall be defined as any criminal offense punishable by imprisonment for one year or more.

- Conduct constituting moral turpitude. "Moral turpitude" shall be defined as a depraved or immoral act contrary to generally accepted standards of Christian conduct as understood according to the teachings of the church.

- Willful disregard of church law, administration, or the properly exercised authority of a supervising administrative officer. "Willful" shall be defined as deliberate, voluntary, or intentional conduct. "Church law and administration" shall be defined as the composite of the directives expressed in the scriptures, as interpreted by the First Presidency with respect to church doctrine and disciplines, *World Conference Resolutions, The Priesthood Manual, Church Administrator's Handbook*, and any subsequently published documents that relate to the above described directives. "Supervising administrative officers" shall be defined as those duly elected or appointed priesthood members who exercise greater administrative authority than the priesthood member to be silenced.

- Willful failure to preserve or maintain a shared confidence. The confidentiality of communication in the performance of ministry must be preserved.

The breaching of that trust may in some cases cause irreparable harm. In other cases the sharing of a confidential statement may facilitate pastoral care. The judgment of the minister is critical in this regard.

- Misuse or abuse of priesthood privileges: seeking to promote a product or service or other personal gain by presenting oneself as a priesthood member.
- Such other disregard for the standards of Christian conduct as may result in loss of power to minister effectively.

c. *Rights of Silenced Ministers.* Ministers who have been silenced have the right to adequate notice, the right to present a defense, the right to be informed of the procedures involved, and the right to appeal. The following principles will apply:

- *Written notice.* The minister to be silenced shall be given written notice of the silence, including a concise statement describing one or more grounds for silencing and the facts supporting each ground; a written description of the appeal process; the right to be heard at the appellate level; the right to present relevant evidence at the appellate level to support the appeal; and the right to appeal on grounds that a substantial error was committed. The notice should follow approximately the following form:

Date
[*Name and address of priesthood member*]

Dear [*name of priesthood member*]:

In accordance with the policies of the church, it is my duty to inform you that effective immediately you are placed under ministerial silence. As such, you will not be permitted to serve or function in the priesthood of the church. Please surrender your priesthood card immediately so that it can be transmitted to the office of the First Presidency.

The silence imposed upon you comes about because of the following grounds: [*State specifically the grounds and any accompanying information, e.g. date, time, place, etc.*]

Reconciling ministry was attempted on [*state date(s) of attempts at reconciling ministry and those involved*].

To date, such ministry has not proved successful in eliminating the need for silence. This silence is not invalidated by failure to achieve redemptive ministry, and redemptive ministry cannot be considered a prerequisite for silence.

Silencing is an administrative procedure, and no church court is involved. Your membership rights and status are not in question. Because this is an administrative procedure, you may not use nonmembers to formally assist you as counsel. Civil courts do not have jurisdiction over this matter. You have the right to appeal this action if you believe a substantial error has been committed, and you will have full opportunity to be heard and present relevant evidence to support your position.

You have sixty (60) days from the date this notice is received to appeal this action. Your appeal should be to the next highest administrative officer, who is [name, title, and address].

In your letter of appeal, you should set forth in plain, concise language the reason for the appeal and whether you wish to have a personal hearing before the appeals officer. You have the right to be represented by the church member of your choice.

It is my desire to assist you in the process of reconciliation. I pray that God's rich blessings will be upon you at this difficult time. If you do not understand anything in this letter, feel free to contact me.

Very sincerely yours,
[*Name of silencing officer*]

cc: First Presidency
field apostle
mission center president

A copy of this letter with all available supporting information should be sent immediately to the First Presidency and to each officer in the administrative line.

- *Ministerial labor.* Ideally, the silencing officer should meet personally with the minister to provide information about the silence and its ramifications and to deliver the letter of silence. If a personal meeting is not possible, then the silence may be imposed by letter only, sent by certified mail or its equivalent, deliverable to the addressee only, return receipt requested. The silence is not invalidated by failure of the silencing officer to meet with the minister being silenced. The silence is invalidated if the minister being silenced is not sent written notice of the silence, stating his or her right to be heard and to speak in his or her defense. Refusal to accept the written notice does not invalidate the silence. Although redemptive ministry is important and should be attempted if at all possible, failure to bring such ministry does not invalidate the silence.

- *Ministerial function after silence.* Upon receiving notice of the silence action, the silenced minister shall refrain from functioning in that priesthood office until the silence has been terminated. A pending appeal shall not suspend the operation of the silence, unless so ordered by the appellate officer.

- *Consultations.* In order to preserve the integrity of an appeal, a silencing officer should not discuss specific details of the silence with supervising administrative officers. Such counsel should necessarily be of a broad, procedural nature.

- *Appeal from silence.* The silenced minister has the right to appeal to the next higher supervising administrative officer within sixty (60) days of notification of the initial silence. The appeal should be made by letter and should confirm the silence, the desire to appeal, and the specific reasons for the appeal. Related matters may also be included in the letter.

While an appeal is pending, the minister affected is still under silence.

Should a hearing date be scheduled, but the appealing party not appear, or if the appellant has been requested to file evidence in support of the appeal and has failed to do so, the matter will be decided on the basis of whatever evidence the appellate officer has available in the record.

When an appeal is filed with the next higher administrative officer, that officer may notify the First Presidency who will provide information from the file detailing the reasons silence was imposed and available evidence in the case.

If the minister appealing feels the need of assistance, such assistance must be obtained from within the membership of the church.

After hearing and reviewing all of the evidence, the appellate officer shall, without unreasonable delay, notify the silenced minister, administrative officers, and the First Presidency in writing as to whether the silence is upheld and the specific reasons therefore. This letter should also contain information about the right to appeal to the next administrative level.

Either the silenced minister or silencing officer may appeal an adverse ruling until all levels of appeal are exhausted. The decision of the highest supervisory administrative officer shall be final. In the event the original silence is imposed by the First Presidency, the silenced minister's right to appeal is governed by Doctrine and Covenants 104 and 122.

d. *Time Limit for Silences.* A silencing action shall not be barred by lapse of time except as follows: (1) Failure of the silencing officer to act within a reasonable time after gaining knowledge of the grounds for silence may be procedural grounds on appeal for dismissal of the silence, and (2) in no event shall a silencing action be commenced later than five years after the commission of a silenceable offense.

e. *Ministry by a Minister in Transgression.* A minister has the right to function within the limits of established policies and procedures until officially placed under silence. The official acts of ministers performed while in transgression are nonetheless valid unless official silence has been imposed by proper authority (WCR 90).

f. *Valid Silences.* Partial or temporary silences are different from temporary suspension in divorce or legal actions (see page 62) and are not valid. Administrators do not have the right to "pocket silence" a minister—that is, to remove ministerial authority without imposing official silence—unless the action is governed by the procedures for ministerial suspension. In this way the right to appeal is protected. All silences must be reported to the First Presidency; they should never be considered a jurisdictional matter only.

g. *Obtaining Information Regarding Silenced Ministers.* Information regarding silenced ministers may be obtained by the proper administrative officers from the office of the First Presidency. It is privileged information, and confidentiality is respected.

h. *Reinstatement of Silenced Ministers.* A silenced minister may be reinstated to any office previously held. This action is initiated by written request to the current presiding officer or at the initiative of the presiding officer. Careful review of the reasons for silence is necessary to assure that the cause of the silence has been substantially removed. In addition, there should be reasonable assurance that the ministry of the reinstated priesthood member will be accepted by the church. The presiding officer should convey the request in writing through the proper administrative channels to the First Presidency, who will consult with the past and/or present officers concerned and determine whether reinstatement is appropriate. It will be given consideration by the First Presidency after receiving written recommendations from each officer in the administrative line. On approval, a new priesthood card will be issued.

A new priesthood call for a minister under silence may not be processed without accompanying assurance that the priesthood member under silence is eligible to be reinstated, and that the reinstatement would be approved at all levels.

i. *Priesthood of Those Reinstated to Church Membership.* On reinstatement to church membership after voluntary withdrawal, former priesthood members are in the "released" category, unless a silence was in place at the time of withdrawal. If an excommunicated member is reinstated to full membership, priesthood status will be that of "silence." In all such cases, reinstatement of priesthood is a separate action from membership reinstatement, and follows normal procedures as outlined above (WCR 922). If a former priesthood member has been expelled from the church, and is subsequently readmitted through rebaptism or administrative action, priesthood reinstatement may not be considered. Such people should be ordained to the priesthood only after the most searching inquiry, and on the basis of a new recommendation by the appropriate presiding ministers (Standing High Council, December 13, 1973).

5. Setting Apart

A. Purpose of Setting Apart

The setting apart of certain church officers is provided as a way of affirming and symbolizing the support of the body for those persons who have been chosen to serve in significant leadership roles. It acknowledges that such service is a sacred trust involving both divine authority and common consent.

B. Who Is Set Apart?

In *congregations*, pastors should be set apart. In *mission centers*, mission center presidents and mission center financial officers are set apart to their respective responsibilities. Where mission center presidents and financial officers have counselors, the counselors may be set apart at the discretion of the officer to whom they are a counselor. At the World Church level, *quorum* presidents and their counselors should continue to be set apart according to the provisions of WCR 109 (April 8, 1870).

C. The Setting Apart Service

The worship service when the setting apart occurs should be timely with regard to assumption of office. It is appropriate for pastors to be set apart in congregations. Mission center presidents and financial officers (and their counselors, if appropriate) should be set apart in a mission center conference, or at some other appropriate setting that involves representatives of the constituent congregations.

D. Officiating Ministers

In general the officiating ministers in the setting apart worship should represent the next jurisdiction level. Pastors may be set apart by the mission center president, mission center financial officer, one of their counselors, or a member of the mission center council holding an office in the Melchisedec priesthood. High priests—including evangelists and bishops—and seventies are members of World Church quorums and are always appropriate officiating ministers for services of setting apart.

E. Continuing Service

Once an officer has been set apart to a particular function, it is not necessary to repeat the setting apart if that person is elected for another continuous term. If reelected to the same position after the intervening period when another has served, it would be appropriate to set the officer apart at the beginning of the new term.

6. The Sacraments

The Community of Christ recognizes eight sacraments, as follows:

1. Administration to the Sick
2. Baptism
3. Blessing of Children
4. Confirmation
5. Evangelist's Blessing
6. Marriage
7. Ordination
8. Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

A. Administration to the Sick (Laying on of Hands for the Sick)

Any person who suffers from illness or injury may request that the elders of the church offer a sacramental prayer, anointing him or her with oil in the name of the Lord (James 5:14). The prayer is accompanied by the laying on of hands, and is often spoken of as "administration." The sacrament may be performed publicly in the context of worship, but is usually performed in the privacy of a home, hospital room, or quiet area of the church. Two members of the Melchisedec priesthood customarily perform it, although one elder or three may participate. The sacrament may be preceded by brief periods of counsel or pastoral comfort. However, the sacrament itself consists of anointing the head with consecrated olive oil, the anointing statement, and the prayer of confirmation.

Traditionally, one elder anoints with consecrated oil and places hands on the head of the person while praying briefly the anointing statement. The second elder then joins the first in placing his or her hands on the person's head while offering the prayer of confirmation.

Sufficient olive oil should be used in anointing for it to be felt, but only one or two drops are required. Anointing should be on the top of the forehead area. The anointing of other body parts, especially open wounds, is not permissible.

While a few family members or loved ones may join the elders in surrounding the person's bedside or chair, the practice of many people holding onto the person is discouraged.

To consecrate olive oil the cap should be removed from the vial or bottle and a prayer offered by a member of the Melchisedec priesthood. Oil should not be consecrated

in large quantities then divided into smaller portions and distributed. No church law or tradition authorizes the use of consecrated oil by those who are not elders.

B. Baptism

Baptism is the universally recognized act of commitment to Christian discipleship. In the tradition of the Community of Christ, the combined acts of baptism and confirmation constitute entrance not only into the larger Christian fellowship, but also into denominational membership.

The prerequisites for baptism are found in Doctrine and Covenants 17:7. Candidates for baptism must be eight years of age or older. They should be properly instructed in Christian discipleship, with the instruction appropriate to the candidate's age and capacity to comprehend. Instruction may be both before and after the baptism (D. and C. 17:18). All baptisms are to be approved in advance by the pastor (D. and C. 120: 4a, 125: 14, WCR 705).

Baptism should occur within the context of a specially planned service of worship, and is held either in a facility equipped with a baptismal font or equivalent, or outdoors at a safe and appropriate body of water.

Aaronic priests or members of the Melchisedec priesthood perform baptisms. There should be only one performing minister unless the candidate's size or health dictates otherwise. Baptisms within the Community of Christ are by bodily immersion. The minister is to use the words prescribed by Doctrine and Covenants 17:21: "...[C]alling him or her by name: Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Church tradition recognizes the use of the word "Spirit" instead of "Ghost" but no other word substitutions.

All baptisms and confirmations should be reported through the congregational or mission center recorder.

Rebaptism is provided only for members who have been expelled from the church and is permitted after approval of the pastor, mission center president, field apostle, and First Presidency, with the authorization of the Standing High Council.

C. Blessing of Children

Jesus called for children to be brought to him for special attention and blessing. In that tradition, the church continues to provide for a sacramental prayer offered on behalf of infants and young children.

The sacrament consists of a prayer. It is to be offered by a member of the Melchisedec priesthood. Tradition calls for the parents to bring the child forward and for one elder to hold the child, if small, while another elder places his or her hands on the child and offers the prayer of blessing. The parents often stand next to the officiating elders. If the child is older, a parent who is seated in a chair may hold him or her, or the child may sit alone in the chair. The sacrament is often performed within the child's first few weeks of life, although it may be performed on an older child, up to the time of the child's eighth birthday (WCR 701). As a child approaches the age of eight, it is more appropriate to focus on preparing the child for baptism than to provide for a sacramental blessing.

There is no required formula for the prayer, but it is appropriate to include a statement of thanksgiving, blessing, recognition of the importance of family and friends in the nurture of the child, and recognition of the role of the congregation in instructing and supporting the child.

The blessing of a child is traditionally a public event held in the context of a congregational worship service specially planned for that purpose. Other settings may be provided for. The pastor is to be sensitive to parents who wish for a child to be blessed on a specific day, balancing the need for planning time with the wishes of the family.

The blessing is not a part of the baptismal sacrament or entrance ritual into the denomination. Any child under the age of eight is a candidate for blessing. This sacrament is not appropriate for children once they have reached the age of eight. Blessings should be reported through the congregational or mission center recorder.

D. Confirmation

Confirmation is the second portion of the entrance act into the Community of Christ. It consists of a prayer offered by one of two officiating ministers, both of whom place their hands on the head of the candidate. Only members of the Melchisedec priesthood perform confirmation.

The prayer of confirmation acknowledges the presence of God through the Holy Spirit in the life of the candidate. The prayer should include recognition of membership status within the Community of Christ, and often contains words of blessing, encouragement, and counsel.

Confirmation is linked with baptism by water. The two sacraments should be performed without great time lapse between the two. Baptisms and confirmations should be reported through the congregational or mission center recorder.

E. Evangelist's Blessing

The evangelist's blessing (formerly called patriarchal blessing) is a prayer (usually recorded and transcribed) offered by a member of the Order of Evangelists. It is performed in a home, chapel, or other appropriate site. The blessing is not held in the context of a public worship experience. The blessing is performed by one evangelist, who places his or her hands on the head of the candidate and delivers words of thanksgiving, affirmation, counsel, life direction, and blessing. Before the blessing, the evangelist and candidate arrange to meet for conversation and instruc-

tion. Any person eight years of age or older is a candidate for the sacrament, although the blessing is rarely offered for someone who has not reached adolescence.

A transcript of the blessing is provided to the candidate by the evangelist.

In addition to the sacrament, evangelists may be called upon to offer special prayers of blessing upon individuals, families, and congregations. The evangelist works within guidelines provided by the Order of Evangelists in giving this specialized ministry.

F. Marriage

Marriage is traditionally defined as a sacred covenant between a man and a woman seeking to make a lifelong commitment of mutual support, love, and faithfulness to one another. The marriage sacrament is usually celebrated in a public wedding ceremony held in a church facility or other appropriate site. The ceremony is a carefully crafted service of worship planned in the context of premarital counseling offered by the officiating minister or designee. Aaronic priests and members of the Melchisedec priesthood are eligible to perform a wedding ceremony, subject to any legal restrictions of the governmental jurisdiction in which the wedding is to occur.

While the structure and degree of formality of the wedding service will vary according to local custom and personal preference, the sacrament as celebrated in the Community of Christ should be in harmony with Doctrine and Covenants 111:2b. Thus, during the exchange of vows, the couple should be asked, "Do you both mutually agree to be each other's companions, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others, during your lives?" After answering in the affirmative, the officiating minister pronounces the couple married, and typically offers this blessing: "May God add his blessings and keep you to fulfill your covenants from henceforth and forever. Amen"

For information concerning marriage standards, preparation, reporting requirements, legal elements, marital discord, termination, remarriage, and other related topics, see Section 17, "Marriage."

Marriages should be reported through the congregational or mission center recorder, and the officiant should follow all reporting requirements established by the civil authorities.

G. Ordination

Two members of the priesthood authorized to ordain men and women to that office traditionally perform the sacrament of ordination to priesthood. The sacrament is performed as a prayer, with the officiating ministers placing their hands on the head of the ordinand. The prayer pronounces the ordination and office, and is often a statement of thanksgiving, counsel, and blessing. Ordination occurs in the setting of a planned service of worship in which the sacrament is the focal worship element. The officiating ministers are selected in consultation between the ordinand and the supervising administrative officer. (In some developing areas of the church, circumstances may suggest that ordinations be performed by a single officiant.)

Aaronic priests and members of the Melchisedec priesthood may officiate at the ordinations of members of the Aaronic priesthood, and high priests and elders at the ordination of elders. High priests may be ordained by other high priests, including bishops and evangelists. Members of the Council of Twelve or First Presidency or their designee normally ordain evangelists, with any high priest eligible to assist. A member of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, or Council of Presidents of Seventy normally ordains to the office of seventy, with any other high priest or seventy assisting. Members of the First Presidency normally ordain bishops, assisted by another high priest.

The officiating minister should ensure that the ordination is reported immediately to the Office of Membership Records so that the ordinand receives a priesthood license, certifying the person as an ordained minister.

For information related to priesthood calls, expectations, review, and status, see Section 4, "Priesthood and Ordination."

H. Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper (often called Communion or Eucharist) is the act of partaking of bread and wine in symbolic remembrance of the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The act is to conform to the established practices of the church, and is traditionally celebrated on the first Sunday of the month, but may be held more frequently as circumstances dictate.

The sacrament consists of the prayers of blessing on the bread and wine (D. and C. 17:22d and 23b), as the participants kneel, followed by the eating of sacramental bread and drinking of sacramental wine. The sacrament is normally held in the context of a public worship service, and is often preceded by a Communion message or statement. Moreover, it is tradition that an oblation offering for the benefit of the poor and needy be received at a Communion service.

Aaronic priests and members of the Melchisedec priesthood offer the Communion prayers and serve the elements. The Communion prayers are to be offered using the words traditionally prescribed in Doctrine and Covenants 17:22d and 23b or using alternative prayers approved by the First Presidency in accordance with WCR 1282. (See appendix.)

Communion wine should be unfermented grape juice, water, or a culturally appropriate substitute where grapes are not readily available (D. and C. 86:1c; 26:1b, WCR 702). The grape juice and bread may be either homemade or commercially prepared.

Bread and wine used in the sacrament are blessed for those who partake of it at the time of the service and with the understanding of its purpose. The blessing does not relate to later use and does not change the element or composition of the bread or wine (WCR 172).

All committed Christians are free to participate in the sacrament as offered in the Community of Christ. The serving ministers should not attempt to determine who should or who should not partake. The decision is left to the participant. Children of family members within the Community of Christ should not partake until such time as they are baptized and confirmed.

The Communion elements may be served either at the same time or one after the other. Ordained and unordained persons may prepare the emblems, set the Communion table, remove any covering linens, and handle the emblems and serving items.

When taking the Communion to persons not able to be at the worship service, prayers of blessing on the bread and wine may be repeated, but is left to the discretion of the presiding minister.

7. Policy and Procedures for the Prevention and Intervention of Sexual Misconduct

Overview

A. Sexual misconduct is a violation of a sacred trust and an abuse of power.

B. Church personnel shall comply with all applicable governmental laws regarding sexual abuse, including child abuse reporting laws.

C. Allegations of child abuse should be reported immediately to civil authorities with the church's investigation to follow or be concurrent with civil inquiry.

D. The church's investigation of alleged sexual misconduct shall be for the purpose of determining its own response, with the intention of protecting all involved from further risk, either of abuse or unfounded allegations. The church's primary concern is for those harmed by the abuse.

E. When sexual misconduct has occurred, the church's actions will be directed to the healing of victims, prevention of further offenses, and treatment of the offender. Treatment is complex and should not be attempted by people who lack experience and credentials.

F. The church will implement measures to minimize the risks of sexual misconduct by its personnel.

G. The church will offer educational materials and programs to its personnel on a regular basis.

H. The church will safeguard the legal rights of people involved in cases of alleged sexual misconduct.

I. There shall be no limitation of time beyond which the church will not accept information regarding sexual misconduct incidents.

J. When a pattern of pedophilic activity is identified, the church will apprise local church leaders where the abuser currently resides.

K. Individuals admitting guilt or found guilty by a court of law will be suspended immediately from any ministerial or leadership role within the church.

L. Before permitting any abuser to resume any ministerial or leadership responsibilities, the church will require assurances of substantial treatment success over an extended period of time. (*Note:* In cases of significant abuse, the church may withhold the right to serve in ministerial and leadership responsibilities indefinitely.)

I. Introduction and Policy Intentions

The church is firmly committed to the pastoral care of people in all areas of need. This policy concerns the church's response to a particular area of need: sexual abuse and misconduct. The intent of the policy statement is to establish procedures that aid in prevention and remediation of sexual misconduct incidents within the church. This policy applies to all people serving the church whether in a volunteer, affiliate, or paid capacity. The intention of the church in outlining these procedures is to exercise its moral and ethical mandate, to comply with laws of the land, and to demonstrate pastoral concern for the victim, the victim's family, the accused, and the offender.

Sexual abuse of children or adults is unlawful, immoral, and a serious offense to the dignity of the human person as created by God. The church does not condone abusive sexual behavior or sexual misconduct in any form, and emphasizes that such behavior can never be seen as arising out of the duties or employment of people serving the church.

II. Definitions

Adult Sexual Abuse: Adult sexual abuse is the sexual exploitation of a person who has reached the legal age of majority, by another person or persons. Such abuse may include both contact or noncontact sexual incidents. The church shall also accept any other definitions applicable by law.

Child Sexual Abuse: Child sexual abuse is defined as the sexual exploitation of a person under age eighteen for the gratification of another person or persons. Sexual abuse may include contact or noncontact sexual incidents. The church shall also accept any other definitions applicable by law.

Church: This title refers to the Community of Christ.

Church Personnel or Personnel: Church personnel are the officers, employees, volunteers, affiliates, or any other persons, paid or unpaid, who work for or represent the church in its events or activities.

Minister: "Minister" refers to all members of the priesthood and all officers or leaders in the church. "Officers" and "leaders" signifies any position of authority including all elected or appointed positions.

Qualified Professional (for sexual abuse therapy): A qualified professional is a social worker, counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist with a minimum of a master's degree in the field. Ideally, this professional should have experience in treatment of sexual abuse, sexual assault, or treatment of perpetrators, as pertinent to the case. Children should be

treated by professionals specializing in child sexual abuse, with a knowledge of play and art therapy techniques. Licensed professionals should be sought if licensing is available in the geographic area in which the incident is addressed.

Sexual Assault: Rape, as defined by law, of any person. (The church shall also accept any other definitions applicable by law.) Sexual assault is always a form of sexual abuse.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment is the use of one's authority or power either explicitly or implicitly, to coerce another into unwanted sexual relations or to punish another for his or her refusal; or the creation of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment through verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual Misconduct: Sexual misconduct is defined as any sexualized behavior or contact, including, but not limited to, adult sexual abuse, child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and sexual harassment, in which the minister takes advantage of the vulnerability of another in the ministerial relationship to engage in or to suggest sexual behavior with the minister.

State: The state is the applicable government of the land, whether local, regional, or national.

III. Policy

A. Sexual misconduct by ministers will not be tolerated. Ministers of the church will be informed that the ministerial relationship presupposes the minister will serve in the best interests of the other person and that sexualized behavior is not appropriate to a ministerial relationship; that the minister is always responsible to not abuse his or her authority and power, even if sexualized behavior is initiated by the other person; that by definition the other person in the ministerial relationship is vulnerable to abuse and when this vulnerability is taken advantage of, the minister is in violation of a sacred trust; and that in the ministerial relationship there is an imbalance of power and authority, with the minister having greater authority and expected trust, thus any possibility of meaningful consent by the other person to sexual behavior is precluded.

B. The church recognizes sexual abuse as a crime according to all applicable laws of the land, as well as immoral and harmful to individuals and society. The church supports the state in its efforts to address particularly the sexual abuse of children and adults. All people serving the church are to comply with all applicable laws, including any pertinent child abuse reporting laws. All personnel shall also comply with internal reporting procedures set forth by the church.

C. The church's role in a case of alleged child sexual abuse shall not usurp that of the state. Any investigation by the church into an alleged child sexual abuse will parallel rather than precede or preclude reporting to and investigation by the proper authorities. The church's role is to report alleged or suspected child sexual abuse made known to it, allowing for prompt investigation through proper legal channels, rather than to attempt to independently determine guilt or innocence of those people involved. Knowing that failure to report to authorities could result in loss of physical evidence or undermine the state's investigative process, reports shall be made immediately to proper authorities outside the church after an alleged incident of abuse becomes known.

D. Due to the nature of sexual abuse, valid instances of such abuse may not be prosecutable and not all acts of sexual misconduct will constitute a crime. The church's own investigation shall be for the purpose of determining its own response to the allegations. Where the evidence is unclear, the church shall reserve the right to take whatever steps it determines prudent to reduce any potential risk, regardless of the legal status of the case. No such actions shall imply judgment regarding guilt or innocence of those involved in the case, but shall represent the high priority of protecting all involved from further risk, either of abuse or unfounded allegations.

E. When a sexual misconduct offense is found to have been committed by a person affiliated with the church, the church's actions will be based on promoting the healing of victims, preventing further offenses, and encouraging adequate treatment/monitoring of the offender. The church's role is to support the healing of all people involved in an allegation or incident of abuse, which role can best be performed by referral to experts in the field of abuse treatment.

Sexual abuse treatment is complex and should not be attempted by people who lack experience and credentials in the field. The pastoral-counseling role should be one of facilitating and encouraging the use of appropriate treatment resources in the community, while providing emotional support to those involved.

Where appropriate and authorized by the person in treatment, the church may choose to share information or collaborate with mental health professionals regarding treatment.

F. The church will implement measures to minimize the risks of sexual misconduct by its personnel: by designating a supervisor to each minister and encouraging consultation; by encouraging collegial contact between ministers to avoid isolation; by developing and implementing clear policies, ethical guidelines, and expectations for all ministers; by providing clear job descriptions; by conducting regular performance evaluations for all ministers based on their job descriptions; by

ensuring that ministers' workloads remain reasonable; by providing resources for referral of individuals to other agencies; and by providing continuing education for all ministers regarding ethics.

The church shall encourage addressing any incidents of sexual abuse in an open and straightforward manner, while protecting the privacy of the victim(s). In all public contacts or questioning regarding the abuse, the church shall emphasize that the church's primary concern is for those harmed by the abuse.

G. The church will regularly offer applicable educational materials and programs on this policy and/or the topic of sexual misconduct to its personnel. All personnel are encouraged to seek additional education to increase their understanding of sexual abuse.

H. The church will work to safeguard the legal rights of people involved in a case of alleged sexual abuse. The church will never ask a victim to give up any legal rights.

I. Understanding that the circumstances of sexual abuse, especially in the case of child sexual abuse, often preclude timely and complete reporting, the church will accept information regarding sexual abuse incidents regardless of the time frame in which the abuse occurred. Likewise, any church personnel who engage in sexual abuse while serving as representatives of the church shall be held accountable for their actions, according to church policies and laws, without a time limitation. (*Note*: Administrative officers should not make assumptions about whether a statute of limitations applies to criminal matters. Statutes of limitations vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. If administrative officers are considering not reporting an incident because a statute of limitations may apply, Legal Services should be contacted before a decision is made.)

J. When the victim of abuse is a minor, it is the policy of the church to report the abuse to legal authorities, local church leaders, and Legal Services at World Church headquarters. Regardless of age, such reports are to be acted on promptly, following reporting procedures just as in the case of a current instance of abuse, to the extent that such reports are accepted by legal authorities. The church will also take prompt internal investigative actions and notify local church leaders in the area where the alleged abuser currently resides, of the suspected past abuse.

K. To facilitate the healing process, the church will respond in a manner that promotes justice and safety for victims, and provides a structure that aids perpetrators in taking responsibility for and changing their behaviors. For this reason, individuals admitting guilt, or found guilty by a court of law of child sexual abuse or adult sexual assault, will be immediately removed from any ministerial or leadership role within the church. Church authorities shall also reserve the right to suspend the ministerial or leadership responsibilities of anyone involved in an allegation of sexual misconduct while an investigation takes place, or if the church's own investigation determines such actions are prudent, regardless of a court determination or confession of guilt.

L. Knowing that people who sexually abuse are often addicted to and rationalize their behaviors, the church will require a written recommendation of substantial treatment success by a qualified professional in the field before considering whether a perpetrator of abuse should be allowed to resume any leadership or ministerial responsibilities if resumption of such responsibilities is advisable. The church understands that a minimum of several years of treatment, with ongoing monitoring/checkups, is necessary to the healing of most people who sexually abuse. The church also understands that due to the addictive nature of sexually abusive behavior, any leadership or ministerial roles that are resumed must, of necessity, be limited to actions performed in public or in conjunction with another representative of the church, in order to support the maintenance of healthy behaviors by a former perpetrator. Any other recommendations made regarding the extent of activities of the former perpetrator by the treatment provider will also be strictly followed.

M. All personnel who provide ministry or leadership of an interpersonal nature shall be asked to read and abide by this policy.

IV. Procedures for Receiving and Handling Complaints of Sexual Misconduct

A. Preface:

Procedures for receiving and handling complaints will be administered uniformly and evenhandedly to honor the victim's need for healing, to prevent further acts of misconduct, and to exonerate the accused if a complaint is unfounded. Complaints may be filed with any officer of the church. Anyone making an allegation of sexual misconduct will be received in a respectful and caring way. Care will be taken to deal fairly and promptly with all those involved: the aggrieved and the family of the aggrieved, the accused and the family of the accused, the congregation, and others. The jurisdictional administrator should be alert in any type of case to the need for consultation with the attorney for the World Church.

B. Receiving a Complaint:

When sexual misconduct is alleged against a minister, the following procedures will be followed (after contacting Legal Services at World Church headquarters):

1. The jurisdictional administrator will be contacted and informed immediately by the officer receiving the complaint. (For purposes of these procedures, the jurisdictional administrator will be the mission center president. If a mission center president or higher administrative officer is accused, the jurisdictional administrator will be the next highest administrative officer.)

2. The administrator will supervise the intervention strategy and will designate two people, preferably one male and one female, to investigate the complaint. Appropriate criteria for selecting investigators are incident-specific; please contact Legal Services for assistance in making this determination.

3. The administrator will meet with the designated investigating officers and the aggrieved person to explain the policy and process that will be followed, offer a support person to the aggrieved, and solicit from the aggrieved person a clear written statement of the experience and the complaint. The administrator will solicit written permission from the aggrieved person (or the parent or guardian of a minor victim) in order to use the written complaint and his or her name in discussion with the accused. The administrator and the investigating officers will also attempt to determine whether this is a single complaint or whether others have experienced this form of sexual abuse by the accused.

4. The administrator will meet with the investigating officers and the accused to present him or her with the formal written compliant, to explain the policy and process that will be followed, to hear his or her verbal response to the grievance, to request a written response, and to advise the accused that the investigating officers will investigate the charges. The fact that the accused may deny the allegations and attempt to discredit the person making the complaint should not be allowed to prevent the administrator and the investigating officers from carrying out their responsibilities and to attempt to discover the truth, i.e., whether the accused probably did or did not engage in the behavior charged in the complaint.

5. If a child is the alleged victim, the administrator will immediately report the suspicion to child welfare authorities, observing any local legal requirements.

6. The aggrieved person is not asked to meet with the accused at this stage, although the possibility of such a meeting should not be ruled out if deemed appropriate.

7. Even when the aggrieved person chooses not to follow through with a formal complaint, the administrator can confront the accused and carry out appropriate investigative and disciplinary action to protect others in the future.

C. Investigation:

1. The investigating officers will gather information in order to form an opinion as to whether there is probable cause, that is, a reasonable ground for belief in the existence of facts warranting the complaint, and report the same to the administrator.

2. After careful consideration of a complaint, if there is no cause to believe the complaint is valid, the administrator should cease the process and respond with care and concern to the person placing the complaint (i.e., recommend counseling and an occasion for reconciliation). In addition, a record of the proceedings and the disposition of the complaint should be forwarded to the First Presidency for the file of the person accused. If the accused so chooses, a public statement may be used to exonerate him or her.

3. If the administrator believes there is probable cause for guilt based on information from the investigating officers, the administrator shall then, if he or she has not already done so, suspend the ministerial or leadership responsibilities of the accused. During suspension there shall be a cessation of all ministerial and leadership duties.

4. All rights of due process under the laws of the church, through its administrative procedures, will be extended to the accused. Nothing in these procedures shall deny the accused his or her rights under the church's administrative appeals process then in place.

D. Action Steps:

1. If, in the opinion of the administrator, the complaint is finally substantiated, the administrator shall discipline the minister by removal from office and consider the appropriateness of church court action if the minister is unrepentant. The administrator, in consultation with the First Presidency, may notify the congregation or other appropriate jurisdictions of the church by way of a letter to the membership outlining the nature of the complaint received, the process followed to substantiate the complaint, and the finding of the investigation. The administrator may provide an open meeting in the congregation or other appropriate jurisdiction for purposes of education, clarifying facts, and permitting feelings to be expressed. The administrator or designee will meet with victims to evaluate and provide ministries of restoration and justice.

2. If the complaint is not valid, the supervising officer will exonerate the accused and take steps out of consideration to the accused that will restore his or her relationship to the church.
3. Whether the accused is guilty or not, the administrator will offer caring and supportive ministries to the family of the accused to reduce their suffering and maintain well-being.
4. If the accused is guilty, the church will require treatment for and restitution from the perpetrator. Should the perpetrator not participate in a plan of treatment or restitution, church court action should be considered.
5. The church will determine whether after treatment, restitution, and the victim's experience of restoration, appropriate supervision can be given or limits established that would restore the perpetrator to service and prevent future misconduct.

V. Preventive Strategies

A. Education:

Church members and leadership should become educated as to the nature and magnitude of the problem of sexual misconduct; what the spiritual, psychological, physical, legal, and social consequences might be; what may be done to reduce or eliminate the problem; and how the victim, perpetrator, and congregation can receive help. Education may be through Temple School, *Herald* articles, seminars, workshops, classes, retreats, reunions, written materials, newsletters, and other communicative means. Leaders should encourage a positive understanding of human sexuality and images of the human body; negative images contribute to exploitive sexuality and sexual abuse. Ministers should take the lead in exemplary attitudes and outlook.

B. Congregational Programs:

The church should encourage, in cooperation with appropriate and professional resource persons and entities, programs in the congregations that help members become aware of, understand, discuss, and seek help for the problems of sexual violence so widespread in our society. The church must "break through" the conspiracy of silence about sexual violence so it can fulfill its redemptive ministry to victims.

C. Designation of Trusted Advisors:

Congregations should consider the designation of one or more people (in addition to elected officers) who are well known and respected, as the ones to whom victims or potential victims of sexual abuse can go. These designated people should be ones with whom victims or potential victims would feel free to talk. They should be familiar with church policy and procedures and trained on the issues of ministerial sexual misconduct.

D. Ministers' Support:

Ministers are not immune from the pressures of today's increasingly stressful and chaotic culture. Sometimes the stress can lead to dysfunction in the life of the minister, who may use poor judgment and behave in ways that are damaging to others. The jurisdictions of the church, through priesthood and leadership training, should minimize the possibility of dysfunction by supporting the personal and ministerial health of the leadership, and press for initial and continuing training in greater ethical sensitivity and clarity on the part of the minister.

E. Screening Process:

A screening process should be established for all paid employees of the church and all volunteer workers who serve as ministers. While such a process to some may seem personally invasive, it will be of substantial benefit to the church in its ongoing effort to provide a safe environment for its children and youth. The procedures used should consist of personal interviews, questionnaires, reference and public record verifications when and as appropriate. (See "Protection of Children and Youth.")

VI. Ministry of Restoration and Justice

The jurisdictional administrator on behalf of the church is responsible for extending the ministry of restoration and justice to victims and abusers. The church's tradition requires it to make justice where there has been injustice and to bring healing and wholeness where there is brokenness. The church and its sacraments are based on an understanding of covenant, not only between the individual and God but between the body of the church and God. The task of the church is to minister to the victim in such a way that the victim is freed from or healed of the abuse that should not have occurred. Asking the victim or the church to extend forgiveness without first facilitating the healing and justice-making process is inappropriate. Treatment alone is not a sufficient response for the one who has committed sexual abuse, because the violation of sacred trust and misuse of power is so grievous that what is lost may never be fully restored. The following ministries of healing and justice, though imperfect, may bring opportunities for the restoring of trust so that at least partial healing for the victim and abuser may take place. The supervising minister is responsible for seeing that such ministries are in place.

A. Truth Telling:

Silence allows abuse to continue. Truth telling is not just fact telling, but is an expression of the emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of those involved, and that experience must be heard.

B. Acknowledging the Violation:

The feelings and the experience of the victim must not only be heard and understood, but the victim must be assured that what happened was abusive and should never have happened. If the church listens to the victim's account but never condemns the alleged behavior, it is in essence sanctioning the behavior and participating in the injustice. This ministry goes beyond simply saying, "We believe you," but also understands the nature of the harm done, that there is regret that it happened, and that the victim is not at fault and should not assume guilt. Setting in motion the appropriate procedures as soon as a complaint is made can provide a partial acknowledgment of the violation.

C. Compassion:

Compassion means "suffering with," or empathy. Unfortunately, accounts heard of another's suffering at times can be explained away, minimized, or avoided emotionally. Instead, supervising ministers must listen empathetically and communicate their emotions about what the victim tells them, be present to his or her pain, and help counteract the isolation a victim often feels. Compassion creates a connection between the church and the victim, which is the first step toward healing the brokenness brought about by the abuse. Compassion restores the connection between the church and the victim, which was broken by the abuse.

D. Protecting the Vulnerable:

Once the church is aware of the potential of abuse, it must do whatever it can to prevent it. If a minister is accused of sexual abuse, steps should be taken to prevent further harm. To do otherwise is to collude in the harm. Suspending the minister from his or her duties until the complaint is adjudicated may be one means of protecting the vulnerable.

E. Accountability:

The church is accountable to its people. When leaders violate their roles, the institutional church should confront them officially and impose consequences based on misconduct. Holding an offender accountable is the first step in restoring him or her to health. It is also essential for the victim's healing.

F. Restitution:

It is improbable that the broken relationship can ever be fully restored, but often the victim can identify how restitution can be made. Restitution does not mean necessarily that the relationship will be fixed, nor that what has been taken away will be returned to the rightful owner, nor payment for damages. Restitution is an opportunity for the abuser to acknowledge the harm done and extend help to repair the damage. This has a symbolic value and, in cases in which the need for payment or reimbursement of monetary costs is significant, is a very practical benefit.

G. Vindication:

Vindication for the victim is the ultimate goal of justice. Vindication means "to set free." When a violation has occurred, the key to physical, emotional, and spiritual healing is to be set free from the suffering it created. It is important that the supervising minister, on behalf of the church, explore with victims what must occur for healing to take place in their lives. Since the church's primary concern is for the victim, the needs and experience of the victim should be seriously considered and support and counseling provided as needed to deal with the experience.

Note: The categories in section VI of this chapter were developed by the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, Seattle, Washington. Additional materials from the center were useful in the development of this policy. (Adopted by the Standing High Council, January 20, 1994)

8. Protection of Children and Youth

Introduction

The protection of children and youth is an important part of the church's ministry. For the purposes of this policy, abuse is defined as "bringing harm to a young person (under age 18) that occurs immediately or through accumulated effects over a period of time."

There are four basic categories of abuse:

- **Neglect** occurs when harm is caused by withholding life's necessities. The ability to provide the necessities, but failing to do so, is the factor separating neglect from the effects of poverty.
- **Emotional abuse** occurs when young people are consistently told they are of no worth and never will be. Name calling and threatening harm or injury are forms of emotional abuse.
- **Physical abuse** is the bodily injury of a person.
- **Sexual abuse** is any sexual activity between a young person and an adult, or between young people when there is an unequal distribution of power. This includes exposing a young person to sexual activity or pornography without their direct participation.

Abuse occurs in every part of society. Church families and church programs are not exempt from abusive situations. In addition youth workers are not exempt from being misunderstood, or from being falsely accused of child abuse. Therefore, the church has established a six-point strategy to reduce the risk of abuse.

Safeguarding Children and Youth and Those Who Minister with Them

The following principles form the foundation of the church's program for protecting children and youth and those who minister with them.

A. Education:

Congregations can receive support in presenting educational programs on child abuse from local social service agencies. Mission center training should consist of programs to assist congregations in preventing and dealing with situations of child abuse.

B. Selection:

The selection of adults to share in ministries with young people is critically important. The church is morally and legally duty-bound to have *all* potential youth workers go through an application and screening procedure *before* they begin sharing ministry.

C. Training:

Training for youth workers is also of critical importance. Congregations that find it difficult to offer training locally should involve their youth workers in training events at the mission center level. Training is also available from Forefront Ministries at World Church headquarters.

D. Protection Barriers:

Protection barriers are a key element in the church's program to safeguard children and youth. The barriers that will be most helpful are:

- ***Two-deep leadership***—two registered youth workers are required at all times when supervising children and youth. Coed groups and activities must have coed leadership.
- ***Visible one-to-one contact***—all contact with children and youth should be in view of other adults and young people.
- ***Respect of privacy***—youth workers need to respect the privacy of young people in camp living situations, and they should protect their own privacy as well.
- ***Appropriate dress***—dress codes should take into consideration the Christ-centered nature of all church programs.
- ***Constructive discipline***—discipline should be constructive and reflect Christian values. Corporal punishment is *never* permitted.
- ***Appropriate physical contact***—physical contact between young people and youth workers is an area where great wisdom *must* be exercised at all times. Physical contact should always be for the benefit of the young person.
- ***Youth worker assistants***—youth ages 15-20 *must* be registered and given training, and must be under the direct supervision of a registered youth worker.

Assuring that these principles are well known and followed by all who minister with children and youth will enhance the quality of ministry overall and provide protection of those involved in children's and youth ministries.

E. Prompt Reporting:

Young people should be encouraged to *report* any improper behavior. Adults in the church are encouraged to teach children and youth the following:

- Young people need to *recognize* situations that place them at risk of abuse, how abusers operate, and that anyone can be an abuser.
- Young people need to know that if they *resist*, most abusers will leave them alone.

- Young people must *report* any attempted or actual abuse to their youth leader or pastor. They should be given the assurance that when they report attempted or actual molestations, they are helping protect themselves as well as other young people from further abuse and that they will not be blamed for what may have occurred.

Congregations should contact local social agencies or World Church Forefront Ministries for additional information on assisting young people to avoid abusive situations.

F. Swift Action:

Swift action in dealing with suspected abuse is essential. Every administrative officer should be aware of the church policy on ministerial sexual misconduct. Youth workers who suspect abuse, or who receive abuse reports, are *required* to inform their administrative supervisor (pastor, camp director, mission center president) immediately. All states and provinces in the U.S. and Canada have laws requiring the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse. Similar jurisdictions in other nations typically have similar laws. Know and abide by the requirements for your area. For those individuals who receive a report of abuse or molestation, the responsibility for reporting that information is twofold:

- the incident must be reported to the appropriate civil authorities as specified by law, and
- the incident must be reported to the administrative officer concerned.

Administrative supervisors are required to remove any youth worker suspected of abuse from any contact with young people. The alleged offender will not be eligible to participate in any program or ministry with children or youth present until completely exonerated of the accusations.

Youth Worker Selection and Screening Process

The six principles for protecting children and youth and those who minister with them are important to the church's ministry with children and youth. Screening those who will work with children and youth is central to the protection of both parties. The following screening process will be used to screen all people who work with children or youth in the church or in church-related activities and programs.

At the heart of any children's/youth ministry are the adults who willingly give time, talent, and self to young people. Adults who view involvement with young people as a *ministry* are the key to successfully meeting the needs of children and youth.

The guiding principle for all programs of ministry with children and youth in the Community of Christ is stated as follows:

Only registered youth workers will be used in the church's children and youth programs and ministries. Registered youth worker assistants will only be used under the supervision of a registered youth worker.

Steps in the Screening Process:

1. ***The purpose of the selection process is explained to the applicant.*** This step helps to determine how best to use the applicant's gifts and talents and helps assure the physical, emotional, and spiritual safety of the young people involved.
2. ***The applicant completes the registration application.*** All questions on the form must be answered.
3. ***The completed application will be reviewed by the appropriate church officer.*** References are checked. The applicant's current pastor or former pastor if the applicant is new to the congregation, and two other personal references will be contacted. Persons may not serve as references or check references for members of their own family. The church officer then signs the Record of Contact form indicating their recommendations about the person applying to be a registered youth worker.
4. ***The applicant is interviewed.*** After the application review has been completed, the applicant is interviewed by the appropriate church officer, or their designate. The interview is critical and no applicant can become registered without being interviewed. When the interview is complete, the interviewer must sign the Statement of Personal Interviewer, indicating they either recommend or do not recommend the applicant as a youth worker.
5. ***The administrative officer reviews the application, references, and interviewer's statements,*** and indicates his or her approval or disapproval of the application. If the administrative officer is satisfied that the applicant is of good character, and that they have the qualities needed to serve as a registered youth worker, they will sign the endorsement statement on the Statement of Church Officer.
6. ***The application is reviewed by the mission center president.*** After completion and review by the church officer, the application and all related papers are forwarded to the mission center president. Mission center presidents then sign to indicate their approval or their disapproval of the applicant as a registered youth worker. All forms are then forwarded to Forefront Ministries.
7. ***Final approval of the application is given by Forefront Ministries***, in consultation with the First Presidency and Legal Services. All applications and supporting documents are kept confidential.

Follow Up:

Only registered youth workers will be used in church youth programs, with the exception of guest ministers from other denominations. Reports on who is currently a regis-

tered youth worker or youth worker assistant are available from the church's membership database. Online recorders, pastors, or congregational financial officers can run these reports. Otherwise, these reports are available from the mission center recorder. To ensure quality, safe programs, it is appropriate to ask people to register even if they are not currently serving in ministry with children and youth. This allows for substitutes or replacements without jeopardizing the ongoing safety of a program. This would include those who are not directly responsible for ministry with children and youth, but who serve in close relationship, such as cooks at camps and all priesthood.

9. Planning and Conducting Conferences

Additional questions on this policy should be addressed to Forefront Ministries, 1001 West Walnut, Independence, MO 64050 or by e-mail to *youthworker@CofChrist.org*.

The church has a long tradition of coming together in conferences to transact the business of the church, to worship, and to fellowship together. Conferences are held at the congregational, mission center, and World Church levels.

> **Conferences are the legislative bodies of the church. They may be regular or special. Generally, regular conferences shall be held annually or otherwise as agreed upon by those who constitute their membership. They may represent the church at large, a mission center, or a congregation. They are subject to the jurisdiction of the First Presidency, members of the Council of Twelve, and appropriate mission center presidents or congregational pastors.[1]**

World Conference:

The World Conference is the highest legislative body in the church. The World Conference is composed of delegates elected by mission center conferences as well as members of the First Presidency, the Council of Twelve Apostles, the presiding evangelist, the Presiding Bishopric, the church secretary, the presidency of the Quorum of High Priests, and the presidents of Seventy. The First Presidency presides over a World Conference. Information on the basis for delegate representation can be found in the Bylaws of the Community of Christ in Article IV, Section 2.

Field Jurisdiction Conferences:

Conferences of mission centers or congregations are regular gatherings authorized by a congregation, a mission center, or by the presiding officer of these jurisdictions. The member of the Council of Twelve who has administrative supervision may also call a conference if the need arises. These conferences have to do with the common interests of the church members within the specified areas. Mission centers have the option of providing for delegate conferences. In such cases the mission center conference is authorized to determine the basis for representation.[2]

Special Conferences:

Special conferences may be called by the First Presidency for the World Conference; by the mission center president for mission center conferences; and by the pastor for congregational conferences. In emergencies special conferences may also be called by the supervising administrative officer having jurisdiction. The call for special conferences shall specify the purpose of the conference and only business mentioned in the call of the conference may be transacted.[3]

Congregational Conferences:

Congregational conferences shall be convened at least once annually and at such other times as are determined by action of the body. Congregations may consider legislation relating to congregational affairs. They may also consider legislation relating to the affairs of their mission center and recommend its enactment by that mission center's conference. No action by a congregational conference can be out of harmony with actions taken by higher jurisdictional conferences. All congregational conferences shall be scheduled by the pastor in cooperation with the mission center president. The mission center president shall receive adequate notice and should be invited to offer any suggestions or nominations he or she may desire to present. In emergencies, and especially when a congregational pastor is incapacitated or the congregation shall have fallen into disorder, the mission center president may request or call a congregational conference; in this or any other necessary situation the mission center president may recommend procedure, present nominations for office, or do such other things as will best protect the interests of the church. When these interests shall require, the mission center president may take over direction of the congregation for a time, administering the work thereafter—either directly or indirectly—until a more permanent arrangement can be made. If the mission center president is thought to have proceeded unlawfully in any of these matters, appeal is to the supervising field apostle.[4]

Mission Center Conferences:

Unless specific agreement has been given by the field apostle, mission center conferences should meet at least annually. These conferences are authorized to transact business relating to the enhancement of ministry and expansion of the work within the mission center. Enactments of a mission center conference are confined to matters of concern to the mission center, including the

approval of mission center budgets, the election of World Conference delegates, and the approval of legislation to be proposed for World Conference consideration. Mission center conference actions shall be in harmony with, and subject to, World Conference action and subject to the advice of the World Church officers concerned. Mission centers may convene special conferences as needed. If, in the determination of the mission center president in consultation with the field apostle, the mission center is unable to convene a mission center conference at least annually, then the mission center council shall be responsible for establishing procedures through which necessary conference decisions shall be made subject to the approval of the field apostle within World Church guidelines and policies. Mission centers have the option of providing for delegate conferences. In such cases the mission center conference is authorized to determine the basis for representation.

The field apostle shall receive notice of the mission center conference and should be invited to offer any suggestions or nominations he or she may desire to present. In emergencies, and especially when a mission center president is incapacitated or the mission center shall have fallen into disorder, the field apostle may request or call a mission center conference; in this or any other necessary situation the field apostle may recommend procedure, present nominations for office, or do such other things as will best protect the interests of the church. When these interests shall require, the field apostle may take over direction of the mission center for a time, administering the work thereafter—either directly or indirectly—until a more permanent arrangement can be made. If the field apostle is thought to have proceeded inappropriately in any of these matters, appeal may be made to the director of Field Ministries. [5]

Notice of Conferences:

Normally notice of all congregational conferences should be given to the members of the congregation at least two weeks before congregational conference and should also be sent to the mission center president and to such other officers as might be concerned with the business to be transacted.[6] Normally notice of all mission center conferences should be given to the various congregational pastors within the mission center at least four weeks before the mission center conference and should also be sent to the supervising field apostle and to such other officers as might be concerned with the business to be transacted.[7]

Quorum:

For the transacting of all business at a congregational or mission center conference, unless otherwise provided by the conference, six or more members present at any properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.[8]

Presiding:

The pastor presides over congregational conferences. At the request of the pastor, or in the pastor's absence, the counselors may preside. The mission center president presides over the mission center conference. At his or her request or absence, another member of the mission center staff may be chosen to preside. Members of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, or their authorized representatives may be asked to preside at any congregational or mission center conference as a courtesy or in view of special circumstances.[9]

It is the responsibility of presiding officers to bring to the attention of the body such matters as may require consideration or action; to enforce observance of the rules of order with decorum and propriety; to secure, as far as possible, a due respect and regard for the laws governing the church as contained in the scriptures, mission center, and World Conference enactments, as well as administrative procedures approved by the First Presidency.[10]

Emerging Congregations:

Emerging congregations (which may include groups such as house churches, expansion groups, cell groups, etc.) are by definition not fully self-sufficient and require significant support from other congregations or the mission center. The groups may have conferences from time to time as necessary with the approval of the mission center president.[11]

Sample Agenda for a Congregational Conference:

Presiding officers should prepare the agenda for the conference carefully and should provide the agenda in advance, if possible, to the conference members. A typical congregational conference could be organized as follows:

1. *Call to Order*
2. *Opening Ceremonies:* (Opening hymn, scripture reading, invocation)
3. *Introduction of Guests:* Any mission center or World Church guests should be introduced. Time should be allotted for these persons to briefly address the conference.
4. *Presentation and Approval of the Minutes:* Minutes of the last meeting should be read by the conference secretary if not printed and distributed. It is always better to print and distribute the minutes so all can review them carefully. The chair should ask for corrections and approve the minutes by unanimous consent with no need to receive a specific motion.
5. *Reports of Officers:* Any elected or appointed officers should be allowed to report any items that are necessary to the conference. If an officer wishes to make a

report he or she should check with the presiding officer before the meeting begins. Reports, when given, should be in the following order:

a. *Presiding Officer*
b. *Counselors and/or Associate Pastor(s)*
c. *Secretary* (This should normally consist of correspondence directed to the conference.)
d. *Financial Officer* (This should be a brief summary of the current financial situation. Questions may be asked by the congregation. No action should be taken to "receive," "accept," or "approve" the financial report. If the *annual* financial report is given, it should be detailed and already audited before presentation to the conference. The auditor's report is then accepted on motion by the conference, and on the financial report. With this action, the financial report becomes part of the minutes.)

6. *Reports of Ministry Teams or Commissions:* (Leadership, Worship, Christian Education, Pastoral Care, Stewardship, Community Outreach, Missionary, Communications, etc.)

7. *Reports of Special Committees:* Any committees appointed to do specific tasks should report in the order in which they were created.

8. *Special Orders:* Any item that *must* be acted upon at the business meeting is a special order for that meeting. Such items might include:

   a. The Fiscal Year Budget
   b. The Election of Officers
   c. The Election of Delegates to Higher Jurisdictional Conferences
   d. Approval or Recommendations for Ordination

9. *Unfinished Business:* Any items that were not completed at the end of the previous meeting are unfinished business for the current meeting.

10. *General Orders:* Any item that was postponed to this meeting by the vote of a previous conference is a General Order for the current meeting.

11. *New Business:* Any proposals that have been turned in ahead of the meeting should be taken up first. At regular conferences the chair should always ask, *"Is there any other new business to be brought before the conference?"* This is any member's opportunity to introduce items of business. New business is not in order at a special conference unless notice of the business in given in the call of the meeting.

12. *Announcements*

13. *Adjournment:* The chair asks: *"Is there any further business to come before the conference?"* If there is, it is handled. If not, the chair says: *"There being no further business to come before the conference, the conference is adjourned."* The chair does not need to call for a motion to adjourn from the assembly. The chair should simply declare the meeting adjourned when there is no further business.

Further information on planning and conducting a business meeting can be found in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (10th edition).* In nations where this resource is not widely used, the field apostle may designate other appropriate resources if they are available.

Notes

1. Bylaws of the Community of Christ, Article IV, Section 1.
2. Ibid, Article IV, Section 3.
3. Ibid., Article IV, Section 4.
4. Ibid., Article V, Section 3.
5. Ibid., Article VI, Section 5.
6. Ibid., Article V, Section 4.
7. Ibid., Article VI, Section 6.
8. Ibid., Article V, Section 5, and Article VI, Section 7.
9. Ibid., Article V, Section 6, and Article VI, Section 8.
10. Ibid., Article V, Section 7, and Article VI, Section 9.
11. Ibid., Article V, Section 9.

10. Ministerial Ethics

A. Ethics

Ethics can be defined as behavior that flows from our deepest commitments and beliefs. Just as parents should consistently act in ways that reflect their best understandings of what benefits children throughout their lives, so also should priesthood members act in ways that reflect life in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

B. Rules

Rules are often thought to be an appropriate expression of ethics. In many respects, ethical behavior in any aspect of life can be thought of in terms of general principles or rules that describe the kinds of behavior that are expected. Nevertheless, no single set of rules can ever perfectly describe ethical behavior. Life is full of examples of rules being broken for ethical purposes (lying to protect someone who is in danger) and rules being followed for unethical purposes (using a "technicality" for one's benefit and another's misfortune).

C. Ethical Principles

Certain ethical principles may be helpful, however, to help define ethical behavior by members of the priesthood. The principles that follow should guide priesthood members as they consider their role as ministers. In addition, certain policy statements relating to ethical concerns will also be noted.

1. Church members should accept ministerial callings on the basis of a sincere desire to be of service to God and to the purposes for which the church exists. Ministerial callings should not be understood as a way of obtaining higher status or as a reward for hard work.

2. Priesthood members should serve actively in their respective offices to the extent to which they are physically and psychologically able. Priesthood members should seek to be good stewards of their time, talents, and treasure.

3. Priesthood members should seek to increase their effectiveness through ongoing training and education.

4. While no one is without sin, priesthood members should seek to live an exemplary life, observing civil laws and behavior expectations of their respective communities.

5. Priesthood members should be able to qualify in the church's registered youth worker program.

6. Priesthood members should observe principles of the following policy statements:

D. Priesthood and Promotion of Private Businesses

Members, and particularly priesthood, are discouraged from speculative investments and other questionable business ventures or their promotion. All people who may decide to invest in enterprises of this kind should do so only after thorough investigation as to the safety of the venture, according to sound business principles. Confidence in the ministerial position of another should never be a reason for making a financial investment (WCR 595).

Under no circumstance should the name of the church, or the names of its officers, its seals, its institutions, pictures of its buildings or personnel, or other aspects of church life be used to imply in any way that any business is "zionic" in character or endorsed by the church unless it has actually been officially authorized.

Members of the priesthood should never use their priesthood office as a means of encouraging anyone to participate in any way in business ventures (Standing High Council, October 15, 1964).

E. Privileged Communications to a Minister

Ministers are expected to observe a high degree of confidentiality in those trust relationships wherein individuals come for counseling, support, or confessions. Such matters should never become the basis for idle conversation or gossip.

Occasionally, ministerial confidences become involved in church court procedures or civil actions. Generally speaking, ministers are not required to disclose to church court information they may have acquired during ministerial labor or counseling. There are a few exceptions, such as when dealing with conduct requiring "casting out" (D. and C. 42:7e) or functioning as an administrator in silencing actions, but this standard prevails in most cases.

Civil court actions can be more complicated. Different countries, and states and provinces within countries, have varying laws that apply to ministerial privilege. When involved in such matters, ministers should develop an awareness of how this is handled in their own jurisdictions so that they can function appropriately within the laws of the land.

The Standing High Council has approved a statement, "Privileged Communications to a Minister" (January 16, 1997), which is available upon request from the First Presidency.

11. Campgrounds

Campground associations typically manage campgrounds. Responsibility for programs occurring at campgrounds (reunions, camps, etc.) rests with the officers of mission centers sponsoring those programs. Legal Services at World Church headquarters has created a series of bylaws for campground associations to create more uniform governance of the church's campgrounds. Please contact mission center officers to establish or modify bylaws for campground associations.

The maintenance, administration, and development of each church campground should be carried out under the guidance of a campground board of directors that represents the congregations and/or mission center(s) concerned. These associations are governed by the bylaws available from Legal Services as stated above. This board of directors is responsible for the physical facilities of the campgrounds, but does not control the programs of camps, reunions, and retreats.

Plans for new development or extensive improvements should be submitted to World Church Real Estate Services for review and approval, and all contracts, leases or other agreements must be reviewed by Legal Services before signing. Camp facilities should be carefully developed and maintained in harmony with increasingly strict camping standards and local and national laws.

Insurance, safety, and other risk management matters should be addressed by contacting Risk Management Services at World Church headquarters.

Information on loans for the purchase, construction, expansion, major remodeling or maintenance of campground facilities can be found in the section on Houses of Worship.

When any piece of property is about to be sold or purchased, Legal Services should be contacted for procedural instructions and approval obtained before a real estate contract is signed.

12. Records Management

In the course of its work, the church produces a number of records, which may be in the form of paper documents, computer files, photographs, audio and video recordings, etc. Proper handling of these records is necessary for the preservation of important information and for the protection of the privacy of church members.

The church has established a Records Management Policy, which is available on the church's Web site at *www.CofChrist.org/cfo#Records*. The World Church records manager is available to congregations and mission centers for consultation. This section contains some basic principles that should always be kept in mind:

1. Records developed in the course of the church's ministry are the property of the church. This includes material such as lists of members or participants in church programs and letters written by persons acting in an official capacity for the church.

2. Church records should be retained for a period of time as suggested in the Records Management Policy, and this policy should govern their ultimate disposition.

3. Personal information about church members, including their addresses and telephone numbers, is maintained for use in official church functions only.

Questions about interpretation and implementation of this policy or the church's record retention schedule and any related directives, procedures, or guidelines should be directed to the World Church records manager at headquarters. E-mail inquiries may be made to *recordsmgt@CofChrist.org*.

13. Legal Issues

Legal Services provides a wide range of legal assistance and consultation for the general officers, quorums, departments, institutions, mission centers, congregations, and emerging congregations of the church worldwide. The information presented here is specifically oriented toward the United States. Similar issues arise in other nations, and Legal Services should be consulted about these issues wherever they arise. Mission center presidents and mission center financial officers outside the United States should work closely with the field apostle and Legal Services to ensure that appropriate legal advice is obtained and that local and national laws are observed. Legal Services may be contacted by e-mail at *legalservices@CofChrist.org*.

A. When a Lawsuit Is Filed

When a lawsuit is filed naming the church as a defendant, notice of the suit could be served on a church representative at headquarters. However, if a local jurisdiction is named as a defendant, the local pastor or administrator could be served, or the church's registered agent within the state or country. The following information will provide some instruction when members or leaders receive notice of legal action against the church. Outside the United States, contact the mission center president and the field apostle; they will coordinate contact with Legal Services.

1. Record the date and time of receipt on the document.

2. *Call Legal Services immediately.*
3. Forward all materials that accompany the summons (envelopes, wrappers, etc.) to Legal Services.
4. Do not talk with anyone except Legal Services, risk management, and other church leaders already involved in the case.
5. Share all details with Legal Services personnel. They are trained to keep all matters confidential.
6. Forward all documents and other related items to Legal Services; you may want to keep a copy for your files.

Legal Services has a response procedure; please immediately contact the legal office.

B. Real Estate Sales and/or Purchases

The Presiding Bishopric holds title to all church properties unless local law requires some other arrangement. If a congregation is considering either selling its present building and/or purchasing a new building or additional property there are procedures to be followed, as well as legislative (congregational) and administrative (mission center) approvals needed. The pastor, financial officer, or building committee member should contact Legal Services immediately once the decision to sell or purchase has been made. Legal Services will work with the congregational and mission center officers in obtaining approvals, review of listing agreements and offers to purchase. Legal Services will work directly with the title company and/or abstract company or attorney throughout the closing process.

Important and relating to any real estate is the topic of real estate taxes. Legal Services can be contacted for assistance on any real estate tax issue, some of which include:

- Real Estate Tax Exemption
- Criteria for Real Estate Tax Exemption
- Application for Tax Exemption
- Tax Notices

Outside the United States, other procedures may apply. Contact the mission center financial officer, who will coordinate contact with the appropriate offices at World Church headquarters.

C. Contracts and Agreements

Agreements and/or leases should be reviewed or prepared by legally qualified persons. In the United States, such documents must be prepared by Legal Services at headquarters. For other countries, the mission center financial officer and the mission center president must obtain professional legal advice in liaison with Legal Services to ensure that the correct procedure has been followed . For specific questions or a resource on contracts and agreements presenting many common questions and corresponding answers, contact Legal Services at headquarters. Contracts approved by Legal Services will have an approval stamp.

D. State Sales and Use Tax Exemption

In the United States, sales and use tax exemptions are used to exempt a church from paying sales and use tax on purchases of supplies and/or equipment to be used by a congregation. This exemption is *not* to be used by an individual for personal purchases.

Sales and use tax exemptions for religious organizations vary from state to state. Some do not allow sales and use tax exemption for religious organizations, other states require each congregation to have its own exemption number, while other states have an “umbrella” exemption which covers every congregation within that state. Example: In the state of Missouri, the Community of Christ is required to have only one sales and use tax exemption number that can be used by all Community of Christ congregations within the state of Missouri, while the state of Iowa does not allow a religious exemption from sales and use tax.

Please contact Legal Services for information regarding your state’s requirements. Outside the United States, it is the responsibility of the mission center financial officer to ensure that appropriate laws and procedures are followed.

E. Protecting the Tax-Exempt Status of the Church and Campgrounds

In the United States and some other nations, governmental entities grant tax-exempt status to certain qualifying organizations. The church has such status, and losing tax-exempt status may cause a number of financial hardships. Without this status, the church or a campground could lose the following benefits:

- contributions to the church or campground would no longer be tax deductible;
- the church or campground would have to pay taxes on its net income;
- the state would likely require the church or campground to pay property and sales tax;
- the church or campground would lose its discounted mailing rate at the post office;
- 403(b) tax-sheltered annuities would be unavailable for church employees; and/or
- depending on the state, the church or campground could lose its exemption from unemployment taxes.

In addition, the exempt status can be revoked retroactively. This means that the IRS may audit contributors past tax returns on which a deduction for contributions was claimed. Contributors would lose those past deductions if the IRS retroactively removes the church’s exempt status.

Churches must meet the following requirements for exempt organizations to maintain their tax-exempt status:

1. The church must be organized and operated exclusively for exempt purposes.
2. No net earnings can go to a private individual.
3. No substantial efforts to lobby are permitted.
4. No political campaigning is allowed.

Failure to meet these requirements can result in the IRS retroactively removing the church's tax-exempt status. If any mission center, congregation, or campground association has questions about tax-exempt status, please call Legal Services for assistance. Outside the United States, it is the responsibility of the mission center financial officer to ensure that appropriate laws and procedures are followed.

F. Copyright

There are specific restrictions regarding the use of copyright protected material under copyright law. These restrictions are intended to protect the rights of the author. The main purpose of copyright protection is to encourage and reward the creation of creative work. As the use of reproduction equipment becomes more widespread, piracy and theft have become an increasing problem. Individuals may be liable if they violate copyright law, and copyright holders have been suing individuals more frequently. Examples of copyright violations include copying and distributing handouts for Sunday school classes, copying and distributing music for worship services, displaying overheads with either the music or lyrics, and showing films without the permission of the copyright holder. Additionally, the copyright holder may sue the local congregation, mission center, and World Church for copyright violations. Copyright law is complicated, and many countries are parties to an international treaty on copyright law. The MCFO should obtain legal advice about what copyright laws apply and should do so in consultation with Legal Services. Legal Services can provide information and respond to any questions regarding compliance with copyright laws by calling Legal Services at World Church headquarters. In some nations where the church is established, international copyright laws may not be recognized or strictly enforced. Nevertheless, it is the church's policy to observe the principles of copyright wherever the church is established.

G. Employment Law and Church Administrators

The area of personnel law has become increasingly important in recent years for church leaders. Challenges to personnel decisions, more government regulation, and overall fears about liability exposure have expanded the awareness of churches that they need to be careful when making decisions involving hiring, supervision, and termination of personnel. Mission center, congregation, or campground association officials should obtain professional legal advice to ensure that employment laws are observed. Legal Services should be contacted to ensure that the relevant areas of law are covered. In the United States, Legal Services should be contacted to discuss employment situations. The staff will be able to provide detailed information, documentation and assistance. Some of the common employment topics handled by Legal Services include:

- personnel policies
- personnel records
- conducting lawful interviews
- understanding and avoiding sexual harassment
- classification as employee or independent contractor
- terminating employees

Outside the United States, mission center presidents and mission center financial officers are responsible for insuring that applicable employment laws are observed.

H. Confidentiality and Privileged Communications

Ministry offered by the church, whether it is offered by ordained priesthood members or unordained church members, creates possibilities for the existence of confidentiality and privileged communications. The issue of privileged and confidential communications has both legal and ethical components. For information on and assistance in understanding the church's position regarding confidentially and privileged communication, as well as guidance in dealing with confidentiality and privileged communications, please contact Legal Services at headquarters.

I. Prevention and Intervention of Sexual Misconduct

Section 9, "Policy and Procedures for the Prevention and Intervention of Sexual Misconduct," provides guidelines for responding to concerns in this area, particularly sections III, IV, and V. These guidelines should help to assure appropriate intervention to alleged incidents of abuse. For specific questions about legal aspects of these issues, please contact Legal Services.

J. Other Issues

There are a number of other issues about which Legal Services can provide information and assistance. For detailed information on the following topics, please contact Legal Services at World Church headquarters.

Employment Issues (in conjunction with Human Resources)

- Terminating employees
- Benefit questions
- Workers Compensation questions
- The Family Medical Leave Act
- Health Insurance Portability and Accessibility Act (HIPAA questions)

Releases

- Event releases
- Photo releases
- Activity releases
- Volunteer releases

Immigration questions

- Business visas
- Student visas

Unrelated Business Income

- Fund-raising activities
- Use of tax-exempt status
- Rental of facilities (income from renting a building to either a non-profit or for-profit group does not create unrelated business income in the United States as long as no services, such as meals or maid service, are provided as part of the rental.)

Taxes

- Use of tax-exempt status
- Protecting tax-exempt status
- State sales and use tax exemption
- Real estate tax exemption

Ministerial Malpractice

- Clergy privilege
- Reporting child abuse

Contracts and Agreements

- Consulting
- Services
- Purchase
- Construction
- Software

Other

- Campgrounds

14. Risk Management Services

Risk Management Services supports the church by helping to minimize the frequency and adverse effects of accidental loss. Our primary objective is to actively work with jurisdictions and affiliates to protect members and friends of the church as well as church assets.

Risk Management Services provides a *Risk Management Information Manual* that can be found on the church's Web site (*http://www.CofChrist.org/cfo#Risk*). This manual contains guidelines and information that address various risk management issues encountered on a daily basis by congregations, jurisdictions, mission centers and church affiliates.

Some of the information found in this manual includes the church's property and casualty insurance coverage, guidelines for higher-risk activities, contractor insurance and bonding requirements, instructions on how to report an insured claim or accident, information concerning use of church-owned and non-owned vehicles, volunteer worker and activity accident insurance and reporting procedures, insurance requirements for outside entities using church facilities or grounds, lifeguard requirements, camp nursing requirements, etc.

For questions and clarification on any risk management requirement or procedure, please contact Risk Management Services at headquarters. In case of an emergency or if a situation develops outside normal business hours, call the following number: 1-816-853-0012. Outside the United States and Canada, contact the mission center president or the field apostle. Risk Management may be contacted by e-mail at *riskmanagement@CofChrist.org*.

15. Fiscal Issues

While the following information relates specifically to the United States, every congregation and mission center should aspire to observe the larger principles described in this section. Where departures from these principles are necessary, it is the responsibility of the field apostle to work with the Presiding Bishopric and the mission center financial officer to develop principles and procedures that are appropriate to the situation and faithful to the concept of stewardship.

A. Access to Financial Information

Internal church financial information, such as contributions received by mission centers and congregations and oblation assistance provided to individuals or families, is sensitive in nature. Access to it is usually limited to the officers in the administrative line who either handle or oversee the handling of such funds. In mission centers, these persons include the mission center financial officer, assistant financial officer, and accounting and bookkeeping staff (if any), and may include the mission center president. In congregations, they usually include the congregation financial officer and assistant financial officer (if any), as well as the mission center president, financial officer, and assistant financial officer. The pastor may also have access to internal congregation financial information if she or he so desires.

B. Confidentiality

Officers who have access to internal church financial information must treat it with utmost discretion and confidentiality. It should usually be disclosed only to those mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Mission center and congregation financial information is sometimes reported publicly. For example, the mission center may give periodic updates and/or an end-of-year recap of its income to its congregations, and the congregation may provide similar information to its members. In such cases, individual contributors should not be identified and the kinds and amounts of their contributions should not be disclosed.

Oblation assistance to individuals or families is particularly sensitive and requires exceptional confidentiality. Only mission center and congregation administrative and financial officers should know about such cases. The mission center financial officer may report to the mission center on the total contributions to oblation by members of the mission center. Questions about oblation should be directed to *oblation@CofChrist.org*.

C. Church Accounts

Church funds should be deposited and kept in appropriate financial/investment accounts: mission center funds, congregation funds, and campground association funds in checking, savings, and investment accounts belonging to the mission center, congregation, and campground association respectively. All accounts should be opened and maintained in the name of the church and not in the name of an individual. Church funds shall not be used under any circumstance to provide personal loans.

Each bank account should have at least two signatories, officers who are authorized to deposit, transfer, pay, and otherwise handle the funds that it contains. On mission center accounts, the signatories should be the mission center financial officer and assistant financial officer (if any), plus the presiding bishop of the World Church. On congregation accounts, they should be the congregation financial officer, and assistant financial officer (if any), plus the mission center financial officer. It is advisable that a husband and wife should usually not be signatories on the same church account as well as other family members. Following these guidelines enables the financial officer to attain proper balance of powers relative to the financial matters of the congregation or mission center. MCFO approval is required to have multiple family members as signatories on congregational bank accounts.

Funds may be deposited, transferred, paid, or otherwise handled upon the signature of one signatory.

D. Tax Identification Number

In the United States, the church is considered a business organization for tax purposes. The World Church and each U.S. mission center must therefore have its own unique federal tax identification number, known as an Employer Identification Number (EIN). Similar requirements may exist in other nations.

In the United States, an EIN is required for opening an account with a financial institution, withholding taxes and reporting wages for church employees, and making payments to independent contractors. Mission centers, congregations, and campground associations should not use the World Church's EIN. A congregation or campground association may use its mission center's EIN to open accounts but must have its own EIN to withhold taxes and report wages for church employees and to make payments to independent contractors of more than $600 per year. Any congregation or campground association that does not already have an EIN should contact its mission center financial officer for help in applying for one.

E. Investments

In the United States, the World Church maintains the Affiliate Investment Pool, a professionally managed investment fund that earns competitive rates of return. Mission centers, congregations, and campground associations may participate in the Affiliate Investment Pool account. A minimum deposit is required, and information can be obtained through the application procedures. All funds, as well any earnings on them, are held in a separate account in the name of that jurisdiction and may be added to or withdrawn at any time. Additional information on the Affiliate Investment Pool, the types of investments available, rates of return, investment philosophy and application procedures may be obtained by contacting Fiscal Services at Community of Christ World Headquarters, 1001 W. Walnut, Independence, MO 64050 or by calling Fiscal Services at headquarters.

The Presiding Bishopric, based on insurance requirements, has established a maximum amount of $100,000 that mission centers, congregations, and campground associations may hold outside the Affiliate Investment Pool. The specific dollar amount is subject to change and can be confirmed by Fiscal Services or the MCFO. United States-based mission centers, congregations, and campground associations with cash and investments beyond normal operating funds and that total more than $100,000 must place them in the Affiliate Investment Pool. It is recommended that jurisdictions with cash and investments beyond normal operating funds but less than $100,000, place these funds in the Affiliate Investment Pool or an insured financial/investment account. Such accounts must be in the name of the church and have at least two signatories, as provided in the section entitled "Church Accounts."

The Presiding Bishopric, in conjunction with the MCFO for the country, will establish investment policies for mission centers, congregations, and campground associations

located outside the United States. These policies are available through the MCFO.

F. Required Financial Procedures

The basic required financial procedures for mission centers, congregations, and campground associations are budgets, record keeping and reporting, contributions, and audits. The financial officer receives and holds all money and property that is contributed to her or his jurisdiction; gives receipts for them to their contributors; disburses funds according to an approved budget; and maintains a sound system of financial records that accurately describe the transactions that she or he makes. Each mission center should have in place an approved set of internal control procedures that address each of these areas.

1. Budgets:

Each mission center, congregation, and campground association should have a budget that supports a program of ministry that is designed to achieve the mission of the church in its particular area. Its administrative and financial officers first prepare a proposed budget that is within the limits of potential funding, and then submit it to the appropriate leadership group (mission center council, congregation council, or campground board) for further consideration. The recommended budget that is developed is presented to the appropriate legislative body for final approval. This process should invite and encourage the general membership to review, understand, comment upon, and ultimately endorse both the program of ministry and the supporting budget for their jurisdiction. The funds of the mission center, congregation, and campground association are received and disbursed according to the approved budget.

2. Record Keeping and Reporting:

Each financial officer should maintain records that accurately describe how the funds of her or his mission center, congregation, or campground association were received and disbursed according to the approved budget. Monthly financial reports in sufficient detail should be provided to the membership, informing them of the progress that has been made toward meeting the budget goals.

3. Contributions:

Contributions from individuals are the main method of funding the mission of the church in local congregations. The following policies apply to the United States. Similar procedures may apply in other nations. Contact the mission center financial officer.

Cash Contributions: In the United States, a set of envelopes is mailed each month to any individual or married couple that wants to use them to make their offerings. Each contributor should be given a receipt for her or his contribution. There are two methods for doing so. Congregations that use the Shelby system to enter contributions should also produce quarterly statements to be given to the contributor that list the funds that have been contributed. Congregations that do not use Shelby enter their contribution data onto the “Contributors Monthly Statement” form. This is a three-part form: one part is sent to the contributor, the second part is kept by the financial officer, and the third part is sent to Fiscal Services. The parts received by Fiscal Services are entered into the Shelby system to provide a database of giving by all contributors. To obtain information on processing of contributions and reporting of contributions, contact Fiscal Services at Community of Christ World Headquarters, 1001 W. Walnut, Independence, MO 64050 or by calling Fiscal Services at headquarters.

Non-Cash Contribution: A congregation may receive non-cash contributions such as organs, pianos, and other equipment. An acknowledgment of such a contribution should be provided to the contributor using Form 165—Statement of Acceptance of Non-Cash Contribution. This form is available from Fiscal Services. Contributions of securities (stocks and bonds) require precise handling to ensure the most beneficial tax treatment for the contributor. Acceptance of contributions of real estate must be considered carefully as there are potential liability issues in taking ownership. Before accepting either a security or real estate contribution, contact Fiscal Services for assistance with appropriate methods to process the contribution.

Major and Deferred Gifts: Major gifts are defined as gifts that require significant planning before the gift due to complex situations or the desire to take advantage of U.S. tax benefits. Deferred gifts are gifts created now, but not expected to come to the church until sometime in the future. A good example of a deferred gift is a gift through a will or living trust. Both types of gifts are typically complicated and require significant planning and effort. The church has a team called Estate and Financial Planning Ministries that provides specialized ministry in gift, estate, and financial planning, using a variety of tools and techniques. These services are offered at no cost to the donor and are provided in a confidential manner. Financial officers are encouraged to either contact Estate and Financial Planning Ministries on the donor’s behalf or have the donor contact this team directly at World Church headquarters for assistance in gifts of this nature. Estate and Financial Planning Ministries may be contacted by e-mail at *efpm@CofChrist.org*.

Procedures for receipting contributions in other countries, not identified above, are the responsibility of the MCFO and the Presiding Bishopric.

4. Audits:

An audit is an examination of the financial officer’s records to determine whether they accurately describe

the transactions that she or he made, whether her or his receipts and disbursements were consistent with the approved budget, and whether the balances that she or he shows to be on hand are correct. The mission center president, congregation pastor, or campground association board chair should arrange for an audit to be performed at the close of each fiscal year. Audit guidelines, procedures, and information may be found at *www.CofChrist.org/cfo#Audits*.

Fiscal Services may be contacted by e-mail at *fiscalservices@CofChrist.org*.

16. Houses of Worship

Building programs of congregations, mission centers, and campground associations are assisted and enhanced by the ministry of the Presiding Bishopric through Real Estate Services and the Houses of Worship Revolving Fund (HWRF) program. Real Estate Services may be reached by calling headquarters or by e-mail at *realestate@CofChrist.org*. Information is also available at *www.CofChrist.org/cfo#RealEstate*. The HWRF program is designed to bring the resources, assistance, and experience of the World Church to the congregation by reinforcing the relationship between the local congregation and the facility planning and trustee role of the Presiding Bishopric. All building projects, site purchases, or sales of property shall have the prior approval of the Presiding Bishopric.

A. Building Programs

To initiate a building program, a simple “Letter of Intent” is to be created and transmitted to Real Estate Services, with a copy to mission center administrative officers and to the field apostle. This action should be taken as soon as it is probable that such a building program is likely to be pursued.

When the congregation has completed their initial planning, they will forward to Real Estate Services information regarding the building project, the financing plan, and the necessary approvals.

The description of the building project should include a discussion of the congregation’s vision/mission and plan for ministry, and how the proposed project will support the mission of the congregation. The proposed improvements will be described, along with preliminary building plans if they are available.

The financing plan will include the estimated cost of the project, a summary of the resources available, and a completed HWRF loan application (if needed). Results of a capital campaign or a discussion of the congregation’s ability to repay the loan must also be submitted before a loan can be approved.

Legislative and administrative approvals include a copy of the minutes of the congregational business meeting granting approval to the building project and the financing plan, and letters of support of that action from the presiding and financial officers at the congregation and mission center. Copies of all building programs should be directed to the field apostle for their review and approval.

When this information is submitted, the Presiding Bishopric, through Real Estate Services, will evaluate the building and financing plans as appropriate for the scope of each project. Once approval for a building project has been given by the Presiding Bishopric, it will still be necessary for construction contracts, insurance and bonding documents, and final versions of the building and financing plans to be reviewed and approved by World Church officers.

Campgrounds or other cross-jurisdictional associations will need to secure administrative and legislative approval from all affected jurisdictions. If any questions arise about the nature or extent of needed approvals, Real Estate Services should be contacted by the jurisdiction initiating the building program to ensure that all needed approvals are gathered before submission of the building program.

B. Houses of Worship Revolving Fund Loan Terms and Incentives

Houses of Worship Revolving Fund loans are made to congregations, emerging congregations, campground associations, and mission centers for the purchase, construction, expansion, or major remodeling of their church facilities, or for major maintenance items which are immediately needed to protect the church’s capital investment and beyond the ability of the congregation or campground to fund.

The World Church is the only authorized lender for any congregation or mission center seeking a loan as part of the financing plan for a building program. Rates and terms for HWRF loans are set by the Presiding Bishopric and are kept favorable to the congregation. Congregations should plan to commit a significant portion of the project costs before the construction or purchase, and supplement congregational resources only if needed. Current information regarding loan policies and guidelines can be received by contacting Real Estate Services. Approval of each loan is based on the following criteria:

- availability of Houses of Worship Revolving Funds;

- demonstrated ability to repay the loan, including the completion of a capital campaign, if necessary;
- application of the net proceeds from the sale of existing property (where applicable) to reduce the amount borrowed;
- satisfaction of the World Church insurance and bonding requirements by all contractors involved in the project;
- placement and maintenance of the congregational insurance program within the World Church Insurance Program; and
- full compliance with the approval process designated by the Presiding Bishopric.

Once approved, a loan commitment shall be effective for a limited period. If construction or remodeling does not begin within that period, a loan commitment extension for additional time must be requested by the congregation, campground, or mission center seeking the loan. It is possible that financial conditions and/or administrative personnel may have changed and a new application will be required.

C. Houses of Worship Revolving Fund "Special" Loans

Houses of Worship Revolving Fund "special" loans are made to campground associations for the purchase, construction, expansion, major remodeling, or major maintenance costs of their facilities. These "special" loans are also made to congregations and emerging congregations for major maintenance items which are beyond the ability of the congregation to fund and which are necessary to protect the church's capital investment. Congregations are encouraged to provide in their budgets sufficient reserves to avoid the necessity of relying on "special" loans to maintain their facilities. The rates and terms of HWRF "special" loans differ from those of regular loans. Contact Real Estate Services if you wish to explore a "special" loan.

D. Capital Campaigns

A capital campaign is an intensive effort to raise a significant amount of money in relatively short period of time in order to fund a major building project. There are several important principles to consider when planning a capital campaign. Real Estate Services is available to discuss the design and execution of a capital campaign with congregational leaders.

17. Marriage

A. Standards of Marriage

The 1984 World Conference approved a resolution (WCR 1182) that provides a positive affirmation of marriage and an emphasis on competent pastoral care and supportive ministry to people in a marriage or in the process of terminating a marriage. The following are a series of principles highlighted in that World Conference resolution:

1. Marriage is ordained of God (D. and C. 49:3a; 150:10; Genesis 2:27–30).
2. Monogamy is the basic principle on which Christian married life is built (D. and C. 150:10a).
3. The church expects that husband and wife will remain married to each other as long as they both live (D. and C. 111; 26:4b).
4. Marriage is a sacred covenant between husband and wife in which the church participates with sanction, blessing, and guidance. The relationship becomes sacred when it expresses the nature of God and God's participation in their lives.
5. The church reaffirms marriage as an institution, a covenant, a sacrament ordained of God, and a legal contract.
6. The church highly recommends to the parties contemplating marriage to obtain premarital instruction and to make adequate preparation for the responsibilities and relationships required of marriage (WCR 972).
7. The church upholds the validity of a legal marriage authorized by civil and other religious authorities and affirms the potential worth of the sacred relationships that can result.
8. As a legal contract, marriage imparts to both parties certain prescribed rights and duties that are generally enforceable in various states and nations of the world.
9. The church recognizes that in some cases either or both partners have legal and/or moral grounds for termination of marriage.
10. In case of termination of marriage where acts of unchristian conduct may have occurred, specific administrative or judicial action may be required with healing and reconciling ministry as a primary goal. Priesthood status will also require administrative review.
11. The remarriage of a person whose previous marriage has been terminated should be approached with the

same careful consideration and preparation as that appropriate for every marriage.

B. Preparation for Marriage

1. All programs of the church should teach and support Christian values, such as the worth of persons, loyalty, trust, and fidelity of covenants. All of these are essential in the establishment of a marriage based on enduring love and lifelong commitment.

2. Marriage preparation should begin six months to one year before the marriage ceremony. While exceptions may occur, adequate emotional space must be provided for premarital discussions between the church officiating minister (the ordained priest or elder who accepts a request to perform a wedding ceremony) and the couple. Tools such as *A Guide to Premarital Discussions* by Dennis Clinefelter (available through Temple School) and the *FOCCUS* inventory (available through Peace and Justice Ministries) are very helpful. Topics to be addressed should include:

    - Lifestyle and expectations
    - Friends and interests
    - Personality match
    - Personal issues
    - Communication
    - Problem solving
    - Religion and values
    - Parenting issues
    - Extended family issues
    - Sexuality issues
    - Financial issues
    - Readiness issues
    - Marriage covenant
    - Key problem indicators
    - Family of origin
    - Dual careers
    - Interfaith marriage
    - Remarriage

3. Ministry of referral: The need to recognize the limitations of the minister in the counseling role cannot be too strongly stated. If a couple demonstrates issues that exceed the minister's training, it is important that they be referred to appropriate professionals. The two tools most beneficial to ministers as they offer the ministry of referral is a referral file and adequate self-awareness. Lack of either tool poses the risk of harm to the couple, the minister, and the church. Referral is a necessary extension of pastoral care in which the minister creates a bridge between the individuals in need of help and the referral source. After the referral takes place, it is crucial that the minister keep in touch and continue to offer pastoral care. Finally, referral is not pastoral failure. It is often the most important expression of pastoral concern that a competent minister can offer an individual or a couple.

4. The sacredness and dignity of the marriage service should be preserved by carefully designing all elements of the service to create a spirit of worship. The actual structure of the service may vary according to local custom and personal preference.

C. Legal Elements of Marriage and Termination of Marriage

1. The church recognizes all legally performed marriages. All marriage services, civil or religious, should be entered into with the same covenantal spirit as found in Doctrine and Covenants 111:2b. Those married in a civil ceremony may request to share their commitment with family and friends in the setting of a church service. A priesthood member who receives such a request should make this opportunity available, coordinating the service with the pastor. All ministers should become familiar with the laws applicable in the civil jurisdiction where the marriage will take place. All marriages of members should be reported to the Office of Membership Records through the local recorder.

2. As a legal contract, marriage preserves individual rights, both real and implied. Officiating ministers should discuss the legal implications with the couple before the marriage ceremony. (For information concerning legal rights and responsibilities consult an attorney, a barrister's association, or civil law authority.) When the church becomes aware that these rights have been violated, it is the responsibility of the minister to offer reconciling guidance and in extreme situations such as personal abuse, desertion, or felonious crime, encourage the person(s) to seek legal counsel. Under all circumstances, ministry should be continued with the individuals involved as much as conditions permit. If the marriage is terminated, a statistical record should be made by the local recorder at the congregational level. Its intention is to report the change in marital status of the members involved.

3. After the matter is heard by the court, in some areas an interlocutory decree of divorce is granted that provides that the divorce does not become final until the end of a specified time.

    a. During this waiting period neither party to the marriage covenant is legally free to remarry. Inasmuch as they are still married people, both parties should govern themselves accordingly in their individual relations with other people.

    b. The couple and the ministers of the church are urged to regard this waiting period as an oppor-

tunity for further efforts toward reconciliation (Standing High Council, March 18, 1965).

4. The language of WCR 1182 does not provide authorization for ministers of the Community of Christ to perform marriages between two persons of the same sex, even in jurisdictions where such marriages are legally valid. The resolution does, however, provide for the recognition of legally valid marriages. Thus, a same-sex marriage may be entered into the church records as a legal fact, just as in other instances where the church recognizes legally valid marriages that it may not choose to solemnize.

D. Ministry in Marital Difficulties

Ministry to strengthen marriages is much needed. When strains develop within a marriage the church has opportunity to bring supportive, healing ministry to those in need. Such ministry requires basic personal skills, a referral file, and helpful insight granted through the Holy Spirit.

1. The main objective of church ministry in marital difficulties is to bring spiritual insights that will strengthen the marriage ties. The approach is that of a healing ministry rather than an inquisitive or punishing one.

2. Because husband and wife are "one" in a unique sense, the difficulties that arise between them are frequently more intense and have more far-reaching consequences than difficulties that arise between members not married to each other and whose circumstances do not require the intimate day-to-day relationships involved in marriage. Because of this uniqueness, the responsibility for ministry in homes where there are marital difficulties should be recognized and accepted by those ministers most qualified. Priesthood members whose specific duty is in the field of home ministry should be encouraged to create a referral file that lists professionals and resources specifically to family issues in order to function more effectively.

3. Qualifications desirable for this ministry include self-awareness, spiritual maturity, sound judgment, genuine personal interest in those having difficulties, and such proficiency in pastoral counseling as may he developed through study, training, experience, and spiritual preparation. This type of ministry requires a high degree of wisdom, patience, humility, sympathy, and understanding. The counselor may be chosen either by pastoral assignment or by the parties involved. Often the selection is based on the amount of personal interest and confidence the counselees have in the specific minister.

4. The ideal situation for ministry is one in which personal interest, priesthood responsibility, and appropriate professional competence are combined in one person. The ones assigned to minister should in all cases recognize personal limitations. Where there is a need for the ministry of referral, encouragement should be given to the parties involved to seek the services of professionals who are especially qualified in the area of need.

5. The marriage may be strengthened by competent guidance and participation in the full life of the church through consistent church attendance, personal and family worship, mutual participation in Christian service, and similar activities.

6. The presiding officer or other officer administratively concerned should keep free from involvement in the intimate details of the difficulty. Nevertheless, the officer should keep in close touch with the situation to be sure that the maximum support of the church is being made available.

7. In situations of marital stress when the possibility of divorce is raised, the minister must be very discreet, laboring for reconciliation, being careful not to intrude in what is a painful decision process.

E. Termination of Marriage

1. In some cases where marriage termination involves a member of the priesthood or unordained church leader (i.e., officially appointed or elected jurisdictional leaders), further administrative action may be required. The priesthood member or leader should be asked to refrain from public ministry until the legal termination process is completed. (Public ministry is defined as that which requires the person to pray, preside, teach, etc., in the presence of an officially assembled church group. In addition, for priesthood members, public ministry means situations that require administrative decisions within the jurisdiction.) Usually this limitation is temporary and continues only if further charges related to unchristian conduct are a part of the termination difficulties, or if the reputation of the person(s) precludes further acceptance of their ministry. No administrative report is required in this situation, unless a silence is imposed. (See "Suspension," page 30.)

2. In extreme cases, administrative silence of priesthood members and/or question of membership may result because of the situation that has precipitated the marriage termination process. When charges of unchristian conduct are made covering such activities as adultery, desertion, murder, personal abuse, conviction of a felony, etc., the situation should be referred to the appropriate officer. Copies of the correspondence or procedures should be sent to the proper administrative officer, but no copies should be kept on file with the local jurisdiction. The minister consulting with the parties involved should keep in mind that reconciliation and healing ministries are

the most important consideration. Judgments are to be made only when it is part of the administrative or court action, and then only by the ministers charged with that responsibility.

F. Remarriage

When there is a request for marriage by a person previously married, careful consideration and marriage preparation (using resources such as the *FOCCUS* inventory) should be conducted. The officiating minister and pastor of the members desiring to be married must make a series of decisions when this request is made. This situation could raise some questions as to whether or not the marriage may take place by church authority. The following information is for guidance in these decisions:

1. There are a number of questions about the current intention and attitude of the couple.
    a. Does the requesting couple understand the implications of their past experiences?
    b. Are they responding to the spirit of reconciliation?
    c. Are they approaching this marriage commitment with the intention of fulfilling their covenant relationship with God and each other?
2. Another important aspect of this decision is whether there are any past behaviors of either person that still adversely affect the attitude of congregation members toward the marriage. If so, additional ministry may be required with the couple and the congregation to strengthen congregational acceptance and support.
3. If there is an unresolved question about the past conduct of either of the individuals, the officiating minister may (with the knowledge of the couple) wish to contact previous pastors or other people who may provide additional information. In cases of previous ministerial silence or court procedure, there will be a record on file at World Church headquarters. The officiating minister may also wish to contact the First Presidency to determine if there are any extenuating circumstances that have been made part of the record.
4. If unchristian conduct has been alleged or proved and the people involved remain unreconciled, ministry of healing should be offered. Care must be taken so that unproved statements or rumors do not influence the decision to deny marriage in the church. If there is no proved behavior of unchristian conduct, or if reconciliation has occurred, the pastor of the members desiring to be married may give approval for the marriage to be performed. In rare instances when there is a difference of opinion between the officiating minister and the pastor, or when approval is denied, an appeal may be made by the officiating minister to the next higher administrative officer.
5. If a decision to deny the right to be married by church authority is rendered, the officiating minister should consult with the couple regarding the conditions that are to prevail if approval to be married by church authority is given. There are a number of circumstances such as time, reconciliation, change of attitude, expressions of repentant spirit, etc., that provide opportunities for ministry to the couple. It is expected that even in this period of disappointment and perhaps anger, the officiating minister would extend pastoral care to the couple.
6. If administrative clearance is received, the officiating minister is free to continue the process of marriage preparation as in any other marriage, and to perform the marriage.

G. Unmarried Parents

When premarital intercourse results in a pregnancy and the question of the wisdom of marriage is raised, the following facts should be kept in mind.

1. Christian marriage is intended as a life partnership based on mutual affection and respect and on the fundamental Christian character of the parties. If such a basis for marriage exists, marriage is generally advisable. But if no such basis exists, marriage should not be advised just because of the pregnancy.
2. The welfare of the child conceived by the parties should be given major consideration in light of the specific circumstances. This consideration should include such matters as the legal status of the child, financial support, and prospective home situation after birth.
3. An equally major concern is the welfare of the parents. This includes the financial cost of the pregnancy but extends to the recovery of the parents to a stable lifestyle.
4. Each of the parties should be advised and helped to accept willingly the measure of responsibility that the total situation indicates.
5. Consultations should be had with appropriate social agencies.
6. Representatives of the church should familiarize themselves with laws concerning adoption and encourage full compliance in matters relating to adoption (Standing High Council, April 24, 1958).
7. Guidance to the church on the issue of abortion is outlined in the Standing High Council policy found in the appendix on page.

18. Membership

A. Baptism

The prerequisites for baptism are set forth in Doctrine and Covenants 17:7. It is important that those contemplating church membership be properly instructed. Instruction may be completed before baptism or may be continued between baptism and confirmation (D. and C. 17:18). All baptisms must be approved in advance by the congregational pastor (D. and C. 120:4a, 125:14, WCR 705).

The minister participating in a baptism is to use the precise words given in Doctrine and Covenants 17:21: "... calling him or her by name: Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen" (see WCR 48 and the section on Sacraments in this handbook).

For rebaptism of members expelled from the church, contact the First Presidency.

B. Confirmation

The sacraments of baptism and confirmation usually require separate services for full impact in the lives of candidates. Such separation permits more adequate attention to these distinctive worship experiences. Separation provides time for encouraging and instructing new members (D. and C. 17:18). It also provides opportunity for each person to prepare adequately for the importance of the confirmation service.

Nevertheless, these two phases of the "new birth," baptism and confirmation, belong together. Their unity will suffer from any considerable separation, because they are intended to support and dignify each other; therefore, the time lapse between baptism and confirmation should not be too long.

C. Membership Responsibility

A member temporarily residing near a congregation, but not enrolled there, is subject to the jurisdiction of that congregation, even though the member does not have voice and vote at congregational conference until enrolled locally (WCR 594).

D. Nonresident Members

Members of the church living within a mission center, but not close enough to a congregation to attend regularly, may be carried on a nonresident list. They are the direct responsibility of the mission center president. The mission center president may recommend the appointment of a nonresident pastor to assist to exercise pastoral and administrative jurisdiction.

E. Legislative Rights

Members' legislative rights are based on the principle of common consent (D. and C. 25:1b). Every member in good standing has voice and vote in the congregation, where enrolled and in the mission center conference, if one exists, unless the mission center has provided for a delegate conference. When elected as a delegate, a member has voice and vote in the mission center conference (where such have been established) or in the World Conference. The only requirement for selection as a delegate is membership in good standing (D. and C. 125:9). Membership in good standing means that a member has not been given the status of "excommunicated" by a church court.

F. Enrollment

Whenever possible, members should be enrolled in the congregation most convenient to their home. The wishes of members who desire to be enrolled in a different jurisdiction than their home area will usually be respected, unless objections are registered by the administrative officers. Members are responsible in their conduct to the jurisdiction most convenient to their home even though their recorded membership may be in another jurisdiction. (See "C" above.)

G. General Membership Category

Church members who do not wish to be affiliated with a specific congregation may be enrolled in the "general" membership category by which they will be recorded as members of their mission center, but not specifically affiliated with any congregation. Enrollment in the general category will be accomplished by transfer. Members enrolled there will have a status similar to those in the nonresident category. Members should not be transferred to this category if they attend their congregation at least twice a year, make a financial contribution, or express a desire to maintain their membership in the congregation. Members enrolled in the general category may be transferred back to a congregational unit on their request, as they would with any transfer.

This category has been developed to address the pastoral and administrative problems involved when a congregation has a large number of totally inactive members who have lost interest in the church. Enrollment in this category should not be interpreted as punishment for inactivity. Members enrolled in the general category are considered to be "in good standing." The priesthood status of ministers transferred to the general category should be carefully evaluated.

H. Nonaffiliated Status

In cases where jurisdictions are experiencing substantial disruption of normal legislative assemblies due to the participation of people involved in unauthorized groups, the appropriate jurisdictional officers may request the First Presidency to authorize a non-affiliated category for their jurisdiction. This is rarely approved and only in the most serious and difficult circumstances. Individuals transferred to the nonaffiliated category are to be notified in writing by the appropriate jurisdictional officer before their assignment to this category. People assigned to the nonaffiliated category are still members of the jurisdiction, but without voice and vote in legislative assemblies. Transfers from the nonaffiliated category and appeals relating to the assignment of individuals to this category are handled through the normal administrative line.

I. Transfers

Membership transfers from one jurisdiction to another within the church are accomplished by the recorder of a congregation or a mission center. A member who is transferring should give the information to the recorder or pastor of either the new or former jurisdiction. Other congregational or mission center officers should accomplish transfers through the recorder.

J. Unknowns

The World Church maintains an enrollment category of "unknown" for members whose whereabouts cannot be established by the local recorders after a diligent search. Transfers to the unknown category are not to be made for the purpose of cleaning the rolls, but are considered only when there is evidence of a thorough effort to locate the member. The Office of Membership Records has a checklist of steps to be taken before a transfer to the "unknown" category will be processed. It is important to remember that once a person is transferred to this list no one assumes regular pastoral responsibility for the member.

K. Withdrawals

Withdrawals from church membership are at the initiative of the member. Recorders and pastors should avoid letters or phone calls that have the effect of suggesting to inactive members that they should consider withdrawing. Withdrawal is not a device for easily cleaning up jurisdictional records.

The church does not give letters of membership transfer to other denominations. Church members desiring to be free to join other denominations may withdraw their membership.

Members determined to withdraw their names from the church rolls must submit their request in writing (WCR 981). Each individual wishing to withdraw should sign. Parental consent is required for minors. A withdrawal is not generally processed without a personally signed request.

Members wishing to withdraw should give the signed form to the pastor, whose responsibility it is to provide for ministerial labor. This personal contact should be completed within thirty (30) days of receipt of the form. If the labor does not change the member's desire to withdraw, the pastor should sign the form authorizing the withdrawal.

The form should then be forwarded to the mission center president for signature, after which it is to be sent immediately to the office of the First Presidency for processing. Other officers in the administrative line (i.e., nonresident pastors, regional administrators, etc.) may sign this form if required by local circumstances.

Some members send their withdrawal requests directly to the First Presidency. When received, a letter of acknowledgment is directed to the member explaining that it is necessary to make contact with the presiding officer in whose area the member resides and that thirty-five days will be allowed for correspondence. The presiding officer is then notified that the member is seeking withdrawal and that ministerial contact is needed. Processing of the withdrawal is delayed for a period of days to provide for this ministry. If additional time is needed, the pastor should contact the office of the First Presidency. If the presiding officer does not report within the thirty-five-day time period, a member who has submitted a signed request will be removed from the rolls without further approvals (Standing High Council, September 27, 1969).

If a withdrawal request is approved, the officer forwarding the request will receive the confirmation of the withdrawal, and a certificate sent to the withdrawing member. The mission center president is notified of the action that has been taken.

Kind, affirmative ministry should be extended to all people desiring to withdraw from the church. If it is their firm conviction to separate themselves from the fellowship of the church, this request should be honored in a timely way. The member should be assured that he or she is invited to return to the church at any time through the process of reinstatement.

L. Reinstatements

People who have withdrawn their membership at their own request may be reinstated in the church at the discretion of the First Presidency (WCR 981). Reinstatement is an administrative action, and rebaptism is not appropriate.

Individuals desiring to be reinstated in their church membership should make a request in writing to the nearest administrative officer, usually the pastor. The officer may inquire of the First Presidency as to the circumstances of the withdrawal and visit personally with the individual regarding his or her current life situation and attitude toward participation in the church. A recommendation is then made through the administrative line, with each of-

ficer adding a recommendation and forwarding it. The First Presidency receives all of these recommendations and then reports its decision to the administrative officers involved. The field officer will inform the members when the reinstatement process has been completed.

Those who held priesthood at the time of withdrawal may be reinstated to membership, but have the ministerial status of "silence" or "release," depending on the individual circumstances (WCR 922). Reinstatement of priesthood is a separate administrative action and usually requires an additional time period after membership reinstatement.

For reinstatement of those who have been expelled or excommunicated, contact the First Presidency.

M. Questions

Questions may be addressed to *memrec@CofChrist.org*.

19. Ministry to Members in Military Service

The World Conference has recognized that members may work toward the church's ministry of peace in many ways, including military service or conscientious objection to military service (WCR 1249). Because the church exists in many different nations and in many different circumstances, church members should reflect carefully on decisions to participate or to not participate in military service.

A. Service Members

Individuals who are members of military services should contact the coordinator of military ministry at headquarters to be provided special communications from the church and the Association for Ministry to the Military. They should also make sure that the recorder in the congregations where they are enrolled have their current address on file. This will assist the church in providing ministry in various ways.

Members in military service are encouraged to participate in congregations located near their military installation. We also understand that many military members choose to be active within their base chapel community instead of a local congregation because of their unique commonality of military service with others in the chapel, the closeness and convenience of the chapel community, and interconnectedness with other military members from other Protestant denominations. Whichever way service members choose to participate in worship it is important to stay in communication with the church if possible.

B. Congregations

Congregations with military facilities nearby should contact the chapel or the senior Protestant chaplain of the military installation from time to time with the current contact information for the congregation. This will allow the chaplain to refer inquiries. Because of the transient nature of service members, many will check local phone book listings for congregational contact information. Congregations are encouraged to assure their phone book listing is current. Members in the military may visit a congregation temporarily or transfer their membership for the period during which they are assigned to a particular base. Involvement in local congregations provides excellent opportunities for sharing life experiences.

Congregations are encouraged to communicate with deployed service members. If a congregation has members deployed someone should communicate with them at least once each month. Congregations that have no service members within the congregation but would like to offer support may sponsor a service member. Please contact the coordinator of military ministry for more information about how to become a sponsor.

C. Chaplains

The church is able to endorse full-time military chaplains in several nations, including the United States. To serve as a military chaplain, a member must meet certain educational and ministerial standards to receive the church's endorsement. Members contemplating opportunities to provide ministry in this way should contact the coordinator of military ministry at World Church headquarters for more information.

Part III—Ministerial Leadership

20. Core Values of Leaders

Core values in any organization are those elements which are considered essential and foundational to that organization. These core values provide the foundation from which leaders provide their leadership. Because an organization's identity is grounded and rooted in these elements, identifying core values is an essential and first step in establishing organizational goals and objectives. Goals and objectives provide direction for a course of action, but values inform those goals and objectives as to their "rightness" and alignment with the identity of the organization. Effective leaders in the church must have a thorough understanding of the church's core values and constantly ask themselves how those values are being integrated into the ministry they are leading.

Discussing the general concept of core values may be less difficult than identifying the specific values for several reasons. Members may have different understandings of what should be considered core values of the church, and in one sense that has become something we have valued in the church: diversity of thought. Any time a list is developed, such as a list of values, there is always a sense of struggle which may come partially from the belief that God will continue to speak to us giving us new insights and understandings. Therefore, for these and other reasons it would be difficult to declare any given list as the final and exhaustive list. However, there are certain elements over the years that have shaped our faith community. These core values have served as anchors as well as guidance for leaders to explore beyond their current understandings of God's call.

A. Focus on the Centrality of Jesus Christ

I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly.
—**John 10:10**

Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection are at the very center of our faith community. We teach, preach, and sing about all of those significant aspects of Jesus. However, as leaders the portrayal of the centrality of Jesus must go beyond the classroom, the pulpit, and our hymnody. Our world is a much different world than the one in which Jesus lived and gave ministry, and circumstances in the world will continue to change with every generation. Leaders of the church must continue to find ways to help the church be shaped by those principles of Jesus in every generation and circumstance.

Those shaping principles include the development of relationships. It was clear from the beginning of his ministry that Jesus was intent on helping persons be free to participate in a new relationship with God and with each other. These ways of relating to each other and God evolved into a community of love, acceptance, and equality. We hold the significance of community as a core value from Jesus' teachings.

The worth of persons was another significant shaping principle in Jesus' ministry. Story after story illustrates his desire to help persons know they are loved, that they have value and are of worth. We value how Jesus recognized the worth of all persons, brought freedom into their lives, and helped them see new opportunities. Leaders of the church are called to be engaged in upholding the worth of all persons and helping establish communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.

B. The Significance of Community

Be patient with one another, for creating sacred community is arduous and even painful. But it is to loving community such as this that each is called. —**Doctrine and Covenants 161:3c**

Our journey as a faith tradition reflects how deeply we value the concept of community. Throughout our history our church has responded to the call to build community in a variety of ways and places. For any community to sustain itself and grow there must be a strong sense of belonging among its members. In the church this sense of belonging means belonging to and being accountable to each other and to God. Community also means having the opportunity to share in ways that are mutually beneficial. Leaders have a significant role in helping provide the types of environments which are conducive to the concept of belonging, environments where people are cared for, nurtured, invited and empowered to grow. In these communities people have the opportunity to realize they have been claimed by God's love. Leaders must find ways in word and deed which point to Jesus' ministry of calling persons into new relationships. They are called to encourage congregations to include community building as one of their primary goals. These leaders will demonstrate an attitude of inclusiveness. Leaders who understand the significance of community will help congregations reach across cultural and ethnic lines to form communities which are diverse.

Leading people into these types of communities requires leaders who have a deep compassion for and value the worth of all persons.

C. Value the Worth of Persons

Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God…
—**Doctrine and Covenants 16:3c**

We live in a world where some people are treated with little worth and respect while others are highly valued

and respected. However, the totality of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ was not for any select group but was and is for all persons. In so many of the New Testament stories we find Jesus associating with those who were on the fringes of society: people who had little worth or value in others' eyes, and those who were marginalized in many ways. In those stories Jesus was attempting to make clear to his followers that all people have equal access to God's grace and that no one should be treated as a second-class citizen. It is incumbent upon leaders to affirm the worth of all people and assist congregations to become inclusive communities where all are invited to share equally in the fellowship of that community.

D. The Proclamation of Peace

Become a people of the Temple—those who see violence but proclaim peace, who feel conflict yet extend the hand of reconciliation, who encounter broken spirits and find pathways for healing. —**Doctrine and Covenants 161:2a**

Certainly at the core of our movement has been the desire to participate in God's peaceable kingdom, Zion. One of our primary challenges is to be on a journey toward that peaceable kingdom. This challenge calls us to understand that the journey toward peace is both inward and outward. Effective leaders will be engaged in personal spiritual practices that enhance their understanding of God's reconciling peace. These leaders are also challenged to call others to this inward and outward journey. In response to this core value, leaders must assist others in identifying disciplines which will assist them in finding personal peace. Leaders also have the responsibility to point out injustices in our communities and help members develop and implement activities that will bring peace and wholeness into those situations. Those congregations and leaders who are effectively engaged in identifying brokenness and pointing to pathways of healing will often be responding to a vision of wholeness and peace.

E. Sense of Prophetic Vision

Lift up your eyes and fix them on the place beyond the horizon to which you are sent. —**Doctrine and Covenants 161:1a**

From the inception of this faith movement, we have valued the interaction of the Divine with us. From that initial experience when God spoke in a grove until today in settings much different, we still anticipate God calling us to new visions and new understandings. This sense of vision is manifest in multiple ways in our faith community. From time to time the entire community is called forth through prophetic counsel from the president and prophet of the church. There are other times when local leaders are prompted by the Holy Spirit to see specific ministerial potential in individuals, and many times those same individuals are sensing a new and expanded vision in their own discipleship. However, prophetic vision includes more than callings to particular ministerial roles. Leaders have the responsibility of being ministers of vision in ways that call congregations to new and sometimes uncharted fields of ministry. Leaders who have fully grasped this core value live in a spirit of hope and expectancy, leading with a spirit of anticipation.

F. Ministerial Skills Development

...[S]eek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning even by study, and also by faith.

—**Doctrine and Covenants 85:36a**

Life-long learning and ministerial skill development are valued within our community. Our hope to remain viable and responsive to opportunities and challenges requires us to be engaged in educational and training activities that will enhance our abilities to seize those opportunities and challenges.

People participate in educational activities to enhance their knowledge on a given subject. However, any effective educational pursuit should not only help the learner better understand a given subject but also provide them with the tools to consider new concepts and ideas. Leaders have the responsibility to encourage members to be engaged in personal study as well provide environments of learning/training in which individuals can experience a variety of ideas and interpretations. Group educational activities could include, but would not be limited to, Temple School classes, Congregational Leaders Workshop, seminary, and skills workshops facilitated by people who specialize in a particular field of ministry. It has been said that knowledge is power. Leaders can help empower members and congregations for mission through educational and training activities.

21. Spiritual Formation for Administrators and Leaders

"For God beholds
With His merciful eyes
Not what you are,
Nor what you have been—
But what you will be."
—*The Cloud of Unknowing*

What Is Spiritual Formation?

Spiritual formation is the practice of spiritual disciplines that invite the presence of the Holy Spirit to be with the practitioner for the purpose of growing in his or her ability to lead a Christ-centered life. Through these disciplines the individual will become more familiar and intimate with God/Christ and more familiar and intimate with self. The spiritual disciplines could be prayer and its various forms, the study of scripture, tradition and the mystics of the Christian faith, meditation, silence, simplicity, service, and others.

As you practice these disciplines you may come to know God in new and exciting ways. You may be more aware of God's presence in all things and experience moments of uninvited grace and peace. Appreciation may be felt at a deeper level for all the blessings that you have and are experiencing through Christ. As you awaken to these new insights they may bring you comfort and assurance but they may also bring to you an awareness of behaviors, habits, relationships, or issues in your life that have become barriers or blocks to becoming closer to God. Confronting the barriers or blocks is important in moving forward on your spiritual journey. As you go deeper in the journey and confront these issues you may want to participate in spiritual direction, a Covenant Discipleship Group, or study group.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, a spiritual teacher of the early Christian faith, had a simple assessment for students who desired to study with him. He would ask two questions: What things in my life draw me closer to God? What things in my life draw me away from God? Each of us can make the two lists and work on enhancing those things in our lives that draw us closer to God and work on diminishing or eliminating those things that draw us away from God. In this process we will experience the transforming power of the Holy Spirit and we will change, first from within and then the change will be expressed on the outside in our service. "Understand that the road to transformation travels both inward and outward. The road to transformation is the path of the disciple" (D. and C. 161:3d).

An important element of spiritual formation is the practice of surrender. In Western culture a person is often measured by how much the individual can accomplish, how many tasks he or she can check off in a short amount of time. Western culture is driven by the concept of the self-made individual making his or her own way by personal willpower (willfulness). Spiritual formation asks us to be still and listen, to surrender to the One who is greater than all and discern what the will of God is for us as a disciple (willingness). There is a natural tension in our society between the sacred and secular, between the concepts of "willingness" and "willfulness." Gerald May in his book *Will and Spirit* addresses this tension by saying that

> **willingness implies a surrendering of one's self-separateness, an entering-into, an immersion in the deepest processes of life itself. It is a realization that one already is a part of some ultimate cosmic process and it is a commitment to participation in that process. In contrast, willfulness is the setting of oneself apart from the fundamental essence of life in an attempt to master, direct, control, or otherwise manipulate existence. More simply, willingness is saying yes to the mystery of being alive in each moment. Willfulness is saying no, or perhaps more commonly, "Yes, but...."[1]**

If one of our core beliefs is being a Christ-centered community, then it is through willingness and surrender that we allow Christ to be the center instead of ourselves.

All tasks for the administrator should be approached prayerfully with an openness to God's influence through the Holy Spirit. Church administration has many tasks that are routine: planning the calendar, organizing events, recruiting individuals for certain tasks, overseeing the creation of directories, developing leadership, and many others. As routine as these tasks may appear, each task contributes to the overall vision and mission of the jurisdiction. The development of vision and mission is usually accomplished with group participation in the prayerful inquiry and discernment of how the jurisdiction will live out the gospel. An administrator who is not engaged in spiritual disciplines will have a difficult time engaging others in the spiritual tasks of vision and mission.

Discernment

"Discernment comes from the Latin word *discernere*, which means 'to separate, to distinguish, to determine, to sort out.'" In classical spirituality, discernment means identifying what spirit is at work in a situation: the Spirit of God or some other spirit. Discernment is sifting through our interior and exterior experiences to determine their origin. Discernment helps a person understand the source of a call, to whom it is directed, its content, and what response is appropriate. Discernment also involves learning if one is dodging a call, is deaf to a call, or is rejecting a call."[2] In spiritual formation the question may be, *whose voice am I hearing in my discernment? Is it mine? Is it my ego's? Is it my woundedness? Is it my anger? Is it the Holy Spirit?* To find the answers to these

questions requires prayerful inquiry and holy listening. Administrators who build time into their daily routine for prayerful inquiry and holy listening will be blessed with wisdom, insight, assurance, and direction. "Zionic conditions are no further away nor any closer than the spiritual condition of my people justifies" (D. and C. 140:5c).

Resources

Web pages:

www.shalem.org The Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation

www. Anamchara.com/sfo-index.htm Spiritual Formation Online

www.upperroom.org/academy The Academy of Spiritual Formation

www.spiritualityhealth.com Rule of Life

www.Google.com Spiritual Formation (many resources)

Books:

Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community. Suzanne G. Farnham, Joseph P. Gill, R. Taylor McLean, Susan M. Ward. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Morehouse Publishing, 1991. ISBN 0-8192-1563-5.

Faithful Listening: Discernment for Everyday Life. Joan Mueller, PhD. Kansas City, Missouri: Sheed and Ward, 1996. ISBN 1-55612-900-9.

Will and Spirit: A Contemporary Psychology. Gerald G. May, M.D. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1982. ISBN 0-0625-0582-3.

Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth. Richard J. Foster. New York: Harper & Row, 1978. ISBN 0-06-0628-316.

Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life. Marjorie J. Thompson. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995. ISBN 0-6642-5548-5.

Living in God's Embrace: The Practice of Spiritual Intimacy. Michael Fonseca. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1999. ISBN 0-8779-3939-X.

Notes

1. Gerald May, "Willingness and Willfulness," *Will and Spirit* (New York: HarperCollins, 1982), 6.
2. Suzanne G. Farnham, et al., "What Is Discernment," *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Morehouse Publishing, 1991), 23.

22. Mission and Discipleship of Witnessing

The Community of Christ mission statement is "We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace." Responding to our stated mission compels us to witness and share the good news of God's grace with all people. This call is central to followers of Christ who acknowledge our great commission found in scripture.:

> **Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.—Luke 24:45-48 NRSV**
>
> **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.—Matthew 28:19-20 NRSV**
>
> **Open your hearts and feel the yearnings of your brothers and sisters who are lonely, despised, fearful, neglected, unloved. Reach out in understanding, clasp their hands, and invite all to share in the blessings of community created in the name of the One who suffered on behalf of all.... Be patient with one another, for creating sacred community is arduous and even painful. But it is to loving community such as this that each is called. Be courageous and visionary, believing in the power of just a few vibrant witnesses to transform the world. Be assured that love will overcome the voices of fear, division, and deceit.**
>
> **—Doctrine and Covenants 161:3a, c**

We share our witness because we believe in the gospel and understand that discipleship is our response to grace. Witnessing and sharing the gospel with others is a lifestyle imperative that blossoms in response to the joy found through living the gospel in our daily life. The spiritual discipline of witnessing emerges from recognizing our connection with, and responsibility to, all of God's creation, including all peoples of the world. We are called to participate in establishing the vision of God's peaceable reign.

Personal witnessing is a process of sharing a testimony to invite someone to experience the joy of encountering God in a faith community. We invite others to experience a new life of reconciliation, meaning, purpose, joy, hope, love, and peace. Our witness of God's grace encourages people to enter into sound relationships—with God, others, and self. Sound relationships provide balance and harmony in our existence. Affirmation of the worth of all people as God's creation calls us to uphold the value of each person and all of life. We witness to others this good news message of God's grace, and we celebrate our blessing through worship, the giving of self to God. Our faith community enables us to discover and actualize our potential to love and become co-creators in our world with God.

Effective ministerial leaders continually challenge themselves and others to engage in the mission and discipleship

of witnessing. As followers of Christ, sharing our witness is not an option on a list of possible responses; it is at the core of our identity and being. All activities and programs of faith communities should be planned and viewed through the lens of personal witness and invitation to others. Ministerial leaders are called to emphasize this essence of discipleship by demonstrating it in their lives. Effective leaders demonstrate God's grace in their relationships and invite family, friends, acquaintances, and casual contacts to respond to, and participate in, the divine calling of discipleship.

23. Stewardship

> **There are many lives waiting to hear the redeeming words of the gospel, or to be lifted from hopelessness by the hands of loving servants. But they will be lost to you without the generous response of disciples who share from their own bounty that others may know the joys of the kingdom.**
>
> **Many are fearful and believe their security is to be found in the accumulation of possessions. The answers you seek are not inherent in the things of this world but in a faith that places its trust in the promises given to all who would follow Jesus Christ.**
>
> **You have been given the principles of generosity, rightly interpreted for a new time. These principles call every disciple to tithe faithfully in accordance with means and capacity. Those values, deeply rooted in the Restoration faith, affirm that stewardship and discipleship cannot be divided and are dependent upon each other.**
>
> **The call to respond is urgent. Look to the needs of your own congregations, but look also beyond your walls to the far-flung places where the church must go. Each disciple needs a spiritual home. You are called to build that home and care for it, but also to share equally in the outreaching ministries of the church. In that way the gospel may be sent to other souls also yearning for a spiritual resting place.**
>
> **—Doctrine and Covenants 162:7a-d**

Stewardship is a principle that is deeply rooted in scripture and in the Community of Christ tradition. Within months of the formation of the church, Joseph Smith gave a revelation to the church stating, "all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal…" (D. and C. 28:9a). With this revelation in September 1830, "Joseph Smith announced doctrines that prepared the way for his faith to go well beyond the traditional call to charitable giving common among most religions."[1]

Unlike some earlier Christians who had concluded that the physical is evil and the spiritual is good, Joseph Smith Jr. denied this categorization, which resulted in the separation of the physical and the spiritual. He saw them both as matter and as having the potential for good. Over time we have come to understand this statement to mean that spirit and matter are complementary. All matter—spiritual and physical—should be used for God's purposes. Thus, as people living in a physical world, we are called to care for this physical world in a way that glorifies God while proclaiming Jesus Christ and promoting communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.

Embracing the connection between the spiritual and the physical does not guarantee generosity or Christ-like stewardship. In fact, valuing material things can lead directly to staunch materialism. Because "every aspect of the life of the church and its members is a theological testimony…our faith is at once a gift of God and a human response; theology is an integral part of that human response."[2] As such, if we are to walk the path of the disciple and learn what it means to answer the call to respond as generous disciples, then the theological testimony of those who have financial resources must be a testimony of generosity. Continued study of stewardship as it is understood through the scriptures is a critical part of our discipleship.

A famous German bishop, Hanns Lilje, commented on his observation of the role of stewardship in the American churches a decade after World War II:

> **To know that with all that we are and all that we have we are God's stewards is the answer to a particularly deep yearning of the time in which we live, namely, the yearning for a *vita nova*, a complete renewal of our life. Here the insights of our American brethren in the faith have, in perspective of church history, something like the same significance as the lessons which the German Lutheran Reformation has taught us about justification by grace, or the Brethren of the Common Life about the unity of God's children.[3]**

Scripture guides us. "Stewardship is the response of my people to the ministry of my Son and is required alike of all those who seek to build the kingdom" (D. and C. 147:5a). As disciples, we understand our stewardship of time, giftedness, and resources as our response to God's gifts of grace and love expressed to us in the life of Jesus Christ. Our stewardship is a personal response to God.

Although stewardship is a historic principle, we must continually find ways to live it out in new ways within our cultures. It meets the needs of a growing church ministry, locally and globally.

> **[S]eek ways of effecting a greater understanding of the meaning of the stewardship of temporalities as a response to my grace and love so that the understanding of the principle may stir the hearts of the people as never before…. to the end that the people may come to provide more fully and joyfully for the great work to which all are called. —D. and C. 154:5**

The Community of Christ's Faith and Belief statement on stewardship states the following:

> **All things were created by God and should be used for God's purposes. Stewardship is the wise management of gifts and resources to enrich personal, family, congregational, and community life, as well as utilizing natural resources for the good of all creation.**

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we accept responsibility to be good stewards sharing generously with others. Our sharing is in response to the gift of God's love for every person. We share our witness of Jesus Christ and our resources. Sharing with others acknowledges that all we have and are is a gift from God to us. Sharing our witness tells others what Jesus Christ and the church mean to us.

Receiving First

Part of our witness as disciples is sharing the news of God's great generosity. God provides "enough and to spare" (D. and C. 101:2f). God shares in abundance, "good measure, pressed down...shaken together, and running over" (D. and C. 154:6). All that we have and all that we are is a priceless gift to us from God. What then is our response as disciples of Jesus Christ? In simple terms, we respond with thankfulness and share with others as generously as God has shared with us.

Scripture guides us in our discipleship: "Stewardship is the response of my people to the ministry of my Son and is required alike of all those who seek to build the kingdom" (D. and C. 147:5a). All things were created by God and are to be used for God's purposes. As disciples of Christ, we explore the scriptures to understand our stewardship of time, giftedness, and financial resources in response to God's grace and love expressed to us in the life of Jesus Christ. Our stewardship is

- a personal response to God's grace and love;
- a means to meet the needs of a growing church; and
- a way to provide more fully and joyfully for Christ-like service and ministry, locally and globally.

Agency is one of the generous gifts God gives to us. Agency is our ability to choose freely how we respond to God's infinite love and grace. Using our agency wisely allows us to manage our time, giftedness, and resources to benefit our personal, family, congregational, and community life. More specifically, our stewardship of financial resources defines the extent we can generously share, wisely save, and responsibly spend. The following six principles of A Disciple's Generous Response guide us in living out our stewardship of resources:

1. A disciple practices generosity as a spiritual discipline in response to God's grace and love.
2. A disciple is faithful in response to Christ's ministry.
3. A disciple's financial response, while unique to individual circumstances, expresses love of God, neighbor, creation, and oneself.
4. A disciple shares generously through tithing so that others may experience God's generosity.
5. A disciple saves wisely in order to create a better tomorrow for self, family, the church's mission, and the world.
6. A disciple spends responsibly as a commitment to live in health and harmony with God and the world.

Sharing Generously

Tithing is a concept deeply rooted in our scriptures. It is our gift to God in response to God's generous gifts of grace and love to us. Generosity comes from a spirit of thankfulness within us, not from imposed formulas and rules. We share what we have because we want to. We share what we receive first from God. Therefore, a disciple asks, "How much tithing can I hope to share?" rather than, "How much should I give?"

Tithing is based on the biblical principle of sharing our firstfruits with God. This means tithing is the disciple's response of thanksgiving and is given before we spend or save from our income. In the Bible the word "tithe" means a tenth part of what one owns or receives. Tithing, according to scriptural principles, is the act of sharing 10 percent of our income with God. As disciples we honor what we have received from God by reaching toward sharing 10 percent or more through Mission and Community Tithes. "Let whoever is of a generous heart bring the Lord's offering" (Exodus 35:5 NRSV).

Sharing through Mission Tithes

Our Mission Tithes go primarily to World and Congregation Ministries. Through them we support world and local missions that fulfill the following scripture: "Let the truths of my gospel be proclaimed as widely and as far as the dedication of the Saints, especially through the exercise of their temporal stewardship, will allow" (D. and C. 153:9a). Mission Tithes are a significant portion of a generous disciple's response. By sharing equally with Congregation and World Ministries, the disciple shares in the mission of the church both on a local and global level. Examples of Mission Tithes include Congregation Ministries, Mission Center Ministries, World Ministries, Oblation, World Hunger, and other designated church funds.

Disciples generally give Mission Tithes during worship services. In a person's home congregation, offering envelopes can be requested from your congregational financial officer (CFO). Offering envelopes allow funds to be designated for World Ministries and Congregation Ministries, as well as give to other funds such as the Building Fund or Oblation Fund. Additionally, some disciples share through direct contributions sent to World Church headquarters. Estate and financial planning ministers at World Church headquarters are also available, on request, to provide assistance in planning other ways to share Mission and Community Tithes.

Sharing through Community Tithes

Community Tithes are a disciple's response to church-affiliated organizations and other charitable nonprofit organi-

zations that are "in the forefront...recognizing the worth of persons and are committed to bringing the ministry of my Son to bear on their lives" (D. and C. 151:9). Generous disciples may share a portion of their tithing directly with institutions such as Graceland University, Outreach International, Outreach Europe, Restoration Trail Foundation, SaintsCare, World Accord, and other charitable nonprofit organizations.

Save for the Future

The principle of saving is an expression of hope for the future. Disciples save in order to create a better tomorrow for themselves, their heirs, the church, and the world. Through planning and careful management, many have found that saving at least 10 percent of their income is an effective way to prepare for the future. "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it?" (Luke 14:28 NRSV). Disciples save for a number of reasons: major purchases, unexpected needs, vacations, retirement funds, college funds, and estate building for family and church. Indeed, disciples can continue their generous response beyond this life by making provisions in their estates for the ongoing ministries of the church.

Spend Responsibly

The principle of spending responsibly is a commitment by disciples to use the remainder of their income to live in health and harmony as they support family, personal needs, giftedness, and interests. Wise and prayerful planning and management of these remaining resources brings financial wholeness in life. How we spend our money is part of our personal witness of Christ. "It is incumbent upon the Saints...to be in the world but not of it, living and acting honestly and honorably before God and in the sight of all men, using the things of this world in the manner designed of God, that the places where they occupy may shine as Zion..." (D. and C. 128:8b, c). Disciples spend responsibly in all areas of life, including housing, health care, transportation, food, clothing, recreation, and personal development.

Live as a Generous Disciple

Generosity is one of the ways we can honor both our heritage and our call to live as prophetic people who help shape the future God has envisioned for all creation. A Disciple's Generous Response is a whole life commitment we choose to make in response to God's wonderful generosity. We express our gratitude to God with each breath of life we take as we share generously, save wisely, and spend responsibly. Understanding our stewardship at the personal, congregational, and denominational levels will bless us spiritually and grow us as a community, so that we can respond "more fully and joyfully for the great work to which [we] are called" and engaged (D. and C. 154:5b).

For additional information and recommended resources, please visit the Presiding Bishopric home page at *www.CofChrist.org/bishop*.

Notes

1. Dean L. May, "The Philanthropy Dilemma: The Mormon Church Experience," *Faith and Philanthropy in America*, (San Francisco, California: Jossey—Bass Publishers, 1990), 212.
2. Howard W. Stone and James O. Duke, *How to Think Theologically* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 2.
3. Douglas John Hall, *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age*, rev. ed. (New York: Friendship Press, 1990), 1.

24. Bringing Balance to Life

> **All life requires a rhythm of rest. There is a rhythm in our waking activity and the body's need for sleep. There is a rhythm in the way day dissolves into night, and night into morning. There is a rhythm as the active growth of spring and summer is quieted by the necessary dormancy of fall and winter. There is a tidal rhythm, a deep, eternal conversation between the land and the great sea. In our bodies, the heart perceptibly rests after each life-giving beat; the lungs rest between the exhale and the inhale.**
>
> **We have lost this essential rhythm. Our culture invariably supposes that action and accomplishment are better than rest, that doing something—anything—is better than doing nothing. Because of our desire to succeed, to meet these ever-growing expectations, we do not rest. Because we do not rest, we lose our way. We miss the compass points that would show us where to go, we bypass the nourishment that would give us succor. We miss the quiet that would give us wisdom. We miss the joy and love born of effortless delight. Poisoned by this hypnotic belief that good things come only through unceasing, determination and tireless effort, we can never truly rest. And for want of rest, our lives are in danger.**[1]

Sabbath is a gift of God to both remind us and to give us *permission* to rest, to bring a balance into our lives. Even our dedication to the service of others as ministers, when not balanced with healthy living, can lead to suffering in ourselves, our families, and in the ones we are trying to serve. Even God rested on the seventh day: "...and I rested on the seventh day from all my work; and all things which I had made were finished. And I, God, saw that they were good" (Genesis 2:2 IV). We rest to bring balance to our lives, to see the goodness that God has placed in all God's creation. When our lives are out of balance we fail to see how God is already moving before us and often fail to see even the direction that God would have us go. From a simple call to serve God, we turn into driven creatures and can burn out from trying

to minister out of our own resources rather than out of God's love and grace for us.

Donald R. Hands and Wayne L. Fehr wrote a book titled *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy.* It was based on their experiences as clinical and spiritual directors working with burned-out clergy in the St. Baranabas Center in Wisconsin, USA. In referring to the ministers they were working with they comment, "They could not begin to get well without entering into their relationship with God at a new depth of intimacy and surrender." They go on to say, "what clergy need above all today is a genuine 'personal spirituality.' That is, they need to find a concrete way of living their relationship to God, so as to maintain a balance and integration of head and heart, work and leisure, intimacy and sexuality, prayer and action, professional role and personal life. In effect, they need to achieve a psychologically healthy spirituality."[2]

To balance one's life, to provide times for rest and self-care is not selfish. It follows the pattern set for us by God in the creation story, and by Jesus Christ who often left the crowds to find balance in his own life and ministry. In fact, as Hands and Fehr note, "the self-care of individuals can and must lead to their self-investment in the mission of the church to the world."[3] In other words, we balance, care for our own lives so that we may be more effective in our ministry with others. This balance is required of both professional and lay ministers. Both have needs of balance, albeit different ones, but nonetheless, important ones if their ministry is to be effective.

> **When we live without listening to the timing of things—when we live and work in twenty-four-hour shifts without rest—we are on war time, mobilized for battle. Yes, we are strong and capable people, we can work without stopping, faster and faster, electric lights making artificial day so the whole machine can labor without ceasing. But remember; *No living thing lives like this.* There are greater rhythms that govern how life grows: circadian rhythms, seasons and hormonal cycles and sunsets and moonrises and great movements of seas and stars. We are part of the creation story, subject to all its laws and rhythms.[4]**

One of the significant findings in numerous surveys of ministers is that, "They do not spend time in silent openness to God or let the Word of God speak to their own personal situations."[5] We are reminded to "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). And we are counseled that we "must not perform anything to the Lord, save in the first place you shall pray to the Father in the name of Christ that he will consecrate our performance to you, that your performance may be for the welfare of your soul" (II Nephi 14:12). This is also necessary for the welfare of the souls to whom you bring ministry.

An unbalanced life and ministry can bring great harm to those we attempt to minister to. Some of the greatest harm in the world has come from those who in the name of God or a religion have sought to dominate others of God's creation. An unbalanced life can also be quickly overwhelmed by the needs of those we are called to serve. Matthew 25:36-47 (IV) can easily be distorted and become oppressive without balanced living. When we see God in the hungry and thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the homeless, the sick, the imprisoned, we see insatiable needs. To not respond is to reject God, we think, and we then fall into the trap of drivenness that can lead to depression and isolation. However, from a balanced life, one lived in the grace and liberation of the Spirit, we can more clearly determine when we should respond and when we should decline. Remember, Jesus declined at times because he needed rest to balance his life. So also, do we. Roy M. Oswald said, in evaluating his own lack of balance that caused him to crash and burn,

> **What if I had viewed God's call first and foremost as an invitation to liberation and wholeness? If I had applied God's Grace to myself first, I might have been able to respond by living a joyful, serene life in the midst of my people. My mission would have been not only to preach the liberating word of Grace to my people, but to model a way for them to live by that Grace.[6]**

Our actions can speak louder than our words. By living a balanced life, we give hope to others by our modeling of graceful wholeness in our lives.

A balanced life is one in which sabbath time is respected as paramount to our ministry. As Muller says, "Sabbath is a way of being in time where we remember who we are, remember what we know, and taste the gifts of spirit and eternity."[7] Sabbath as balance is more than just what we normally think of as "spiritual activities," but also exercise, hobbies, time with family, reading, taking time off, etc., for "purposeless enjoyment."[8]

The more balanced our lives as ministers, the more we can let ourselves be loved and affirmed by God at ever deepening levels. When we operate out of a sense of our belovedness, we will have a "heightened awareness of God in all things (including the work of ministering to others), a relaxed reliance upon divine power in all that one undertakes, a nonanxious presence to others, a deep *affective* relationship to God, and preaching from the heart *to* the heart."[9] A balanced life is a holy life and a more effective instrument available for Godly purposes.

Notes

1. Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Restoring the Sacred Rhythm of Rest* (New York: Bantam, 1999), 1.
2. Donald R. Hands and Wayne L. Fehr, *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy* (Bethesda, Maryland: Alban Institute, 1993), xviii.
3. Ibid., xix.
4. Muller, *Sabbath*, 68–69.
5. Hands and Fehr, 13.
6. Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care* (Bethesda, Maryland: Alban Institute, 1991), 15.
7. Muller, *Sabbath*, 6.
8. Ibid.
9. Hands and Fehr, 63.

25. Leadership Expectations

The list of expectations for competent church leadership is a long one. While no one person could possibly have all the gifts and skills required for excellent ecclesiastical leadership, most congregations do have several individuals who, if they choose to work together, can provide the kind of leadership God's people deserve. The following are ten expectations:

Pastor and Servant:

Church leaders are called to be kind, caring, and loving people who understand that God cherishes all creation and calls us to do the same. They understand the relational nature of the gospel and are committed to being a part of a loving, nurturing congregational unit. The leader humbly serves to meet human needs and helps others live out God's desires for creation. Good leaders are able to honor the emotions and feelings of others, and are able to sense how others are feeling.

Collaborator and Networker:

Although different leadership styles are appropriate based on individual circumstance, the primary model for Community of Christ leaders is that of collaborator and networker. They are called to work together in partnership and to seek out others whose abilities can be blended for the good of all. No single individual has the time, capacity, or skill to successfully lead the church. Church administrators should capitalize on this reality and turn it into a blessing.

Motivator and Inspirer:

Lifelong religious faith and practice involves motivation and inspriation. Leaders are called upon to be, to speak, and to act in ways that stir in others the desire to respond to God's love and goodness. Those who motivate find ways to speak to the human condition and our capacity to make a difference in God's world.

Preacher and Teacher:

Leaders are constantly informing, guiding, instructing, and causing others to focus on key life issues. Religious leaders not only do this in the classroom but also the pulpit. Church leadership demands those who serve to develop good teaching and preaching skills.

Organizer and Communicator:

The competing demands of life require the effective leader to be organized, efficient, prompt, and always in the mode of communicator and informer. Congregations and mission centers cannot function unless there is a workable, comprehensible structure in place. The wise leader also understands that information must be shared in a variety of ways, over a period of time, and with clarity.

Student and Learner:

Those committed to a lifetime of service recognize the need for ongoing education, training, and development. Church leaders should find venues wherein they can continuously improve their theological, administrative, and pastoral skills.

Bridge and Conduit:

Church administrators are the link between the entire denomination, the mission center, and the congregation. They have allegiance to all three and work to integrate them into a holistic witnessing body of disciples. They are informed as to the purpose of the three units and help them function in harmony.

Visionary and Guide:

Leaders function in the present but understand the "big picture" and can help others understand the future that can be created. They understand the church's call to proclaim Jesus Christ and to build community. Visionaries are both dreamers and pragmatists, and they are able to describe the various possibilities that can be translated into reality.

Missionary and Evangelist:

Christian leaders understand that invitation, witness, and hospitality are spiritual dimensions to life and are not optional if one is to be a disciple. Leaders are called not only to proclaim the good news, but to share it with those who have not heard. Christian leaders seek out those who are searching and are quick to ask others to join them in a life of study, praise, and service.

Self-Aware, Self-Managed, and Self-Motivated:

Those who seek to give a lifetime of service and leadership are "in it for the long haul." They realize that good intention and temporary excitement are not sufficient. As such effective ministers are self-aware, self-managed, and self-motivated. They are aware of their own thoughts, feelings, and shortcomings, and they have the ability to manage their own time, emotions, impulses, feelings, and ideas. Christian leaders persist even in the midst of failure and disappointment, and find new ways to tackle difficult issues.

26. Collaborative Leadership

Being a leader means being a servant first. Seeing leadership as a calling to ministry allows the leader to be more helpful to the congregation. The welfare of the congregation should be the most important motivation for the leader. The leadership role is a stewardship that one fills until a better leader comes along. The leadership role should not be owned or possessed by any one person. A servant leader partners with others so that the congregation benefits from the gifts of many. The focus of the leader is to serve the congregation regardless of personal gain or loss.

The effective, collaborative leader builds a team that is charged with the power to create a vision and act upon it. The individual members are allowed to express their gifts and callings while serving as members of the leadership team. Members of the team mentor one another, advocate for one another, empower one another, and support one another.

Recruitment and support of volunteer team members is much as it would be if the team members were full-time employees. First, identify those who have the gift or calling for a particular role. Sometimes the individual may have developed his or her gift, other times the person may barely be aware of it. Recruit the team members who will most complement the task at hand. Second, work with the person to assure that the demands of the role are realistic in relation to the person's available time and energy. It is important that the logistics of the role do not put unreasonable demands on the person. Third, follow the guidelines for effective team building and support, including the understanding of effective team process. That includes the following elements:

- *Forming the team*—this is a time of excitement and newness when members are optimistic about the team participation.
- *Adjusting the team*—as the individuals become a team, conflicts can arise; members get to know each other's strengths and weaknesses.
- *Becoming a team*—individuals gel into a functioning team and loyalty is developed; the team sees itself as a unit and finds it can laugh or cry together.
- *Performing as a team*—like a flock of geese flying in a "V" with the lead position being shared as each one's energy allows, team members share leadership and delegate roles when appropriate.
- *Celebrating the team's conclusion*—at the end of team function, members celebrate the accomplishments of the team and dismiss the members.

Collaborative leadership includes conducting responsible and effective team meetings. The operational guidelines of such a meeting should include:

- Having a purpose for the meeting
- Starting on time
- Agreeing on the meeting time and length
- Setting priorities
- Following an agenda
- Managing the time during the meeting
- Organizing tasks and making assignments
- Listening effectively
- Building consensus

The collaborative leader forms an empowered team. By following the guidelines outlined in this discussion, the team can be effective and responsive to the needs of the congregation. The congregation and the leadership team are then blessed.

27. Congregational Systems

Christian discipleship is a social activity. Ministry best occurs in motivated, passionate, and compassionate communities, rather than lone individuals. Healthy congregations are faith communities that provide transformational ministries fostering good relationships with God, others and self. A healthy congregation is an interdependent system of relationships, processes, goals, and activities. Effective ministerial leaders are called to acknowledge, uphold, and encourage the invaluable contributions each person gives to the success of the whole body. Congregations become vital expressions of the body of Christ when its spiritual energy is released, passionate discipleship is demonstrated, various voices are integrated, relationships are deepened, decision-making is collaborative, and collective learning is ongoing.

Community of Christ congregations promote mission and grow disciples through a wide variety of formal and informal leadership systems. Effective ministerial leaders become proficient in functioning within the organizational structures and environments guiding the ministry of their congregation without becoming shackled by the limitations of their congregational system. In many situations, the appropriate leadership step is to modify and adjust the organizational structure to better address the current needs of the congregation. This ministerial leadership skill of understanding, working with and through congregational systems is important for all groups, small or large, young or old, traditional or contemporary, conservative and ones continuously expanding their scope of ministries and witness. Leaders in healthy congregations guide members into

active mission response through effective use of available congregational leadership systems.

Congregational leadership systems have three basic arenas: (1) official administrative directors; (2) passionate and competent influencers and spokespeople; and (3) keepers of relational traditions, cultures, and norms. These three areas are not mutually exclusive; nevertheless, they often represent distinct voices in congregational life and direction. Healthy congregations incorporate each of these arenas of perspectives in their programs and ministry.

Official Administrative Directors:

For most congregations, this voice is represented by the elected pastor, the associated counselors, and the appointed financial officer. In healthy congregational systems, this voice upholds local mission, connects with world mission and denominational ties, promotes active worship life, organizes the calendar of events, assures pastoral ministry, assures financial solvency, stimulates creative input from the body, and guides programs and activities with intentionality. This voice provides formal leadership that people internal and external to the congregation expect from organizational entities. In unhealthy systems, this voice becomes dictatorial or, inversely, becomes invisible and non-existent, creating the appearance of a rudderless group. In unhealthy congregations, this voice may limit information sharing and hinder interdependence by promoting environments of dependency. In unhealthy congregations, this voice evolves into the sole voice of the congregation. Congregations need healthy input, direction, and encouragement from official administrative directors in their leadership system.

Passionate and Competent Influencers and Spokespeople:

This congregational voice often is represented by program leaders, former and future administrative officers, and activists who are energized by the ideals of Christian discipleship. In healthy congregational systems, this voice upholds servant ministry principles and values, promotes growth into new areas of ministry, reminds people of the influence of the Holy Spirit, upholds theological foundations of activities, brings a sense of immediacy to ministry, and assures self-reflection and self-assessment. This voice provides energy creating texture, substance, enthusiasm, and spirituality to the congregation's programs and ministries. In unhealthy systems, this voice becomes overly critical and judgmental or, inversely, is completely ignored. In unhealthy congregations, this voice may fragment the group by creating environments of ultimatum-giving arising from competing moral and time-commitment imperatives. In unhealthy congregations, this voice evolves into destructive self-righteousness. Congregations need healthy input, response, support, and guidance from passionate and competent influencers and spokespeople in their leadership system.

Keepers of Relational Traditions, Cultures, and Norms:

This congregational voice usually is represented by long-time members, people with extended family connections within the group, and congenial people heartened by the ideals of Christian fellowship. In healthy congregational systems, this voice upholds a sense of identity and history, promotes positive self-esteem, maintains contacts and pastoral care, brings a sense of acceptance in ministry, promotes social interactions and activities, assures interpersonal connections and relationship-building. This voice provides connective links giving rhythm and interdependency to the activity flow and people of the congregation. In unhealthy systems, this voice becomes overly rigid and a barrier for growth or, inversely, is marginalized and not heard. In unhealthy congregations, this voice may diminish creativity and passion by focusing solely on successful people and programs of the past. In unhealthy congregations, this voice evolves into a mechanism of exclusive control and direction. Congregations need healthy input, approval, perspective, and insight from keepers of relational traditions, cultures and norms.

Effective ministerial leaders are challenged to understand the balance of the different arenas of voices in their congregational leadership system. The success of programs and ministry depends upon healthy inclusion of a wide range of perspectives in planning and implementation. In many congregations a few people represent all three of the voice arenas; in some cases this situation is inevitable because of the small numbers in the group. In most cases, however, too few people laying claim to representing all voices is a cautionary symptom pointing to exclusive ownership of congregational leadership. Too often, congregational leaders feeling they are the only ones able and willing to provide ministry becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Collaborative and inclusive decision-making is a modern-day expectation in healthy and Spirit-filled congregational life. Healthy congregational systems empower all participants to respond in discipleship with enthusiasm, commitment, joy, and a desire to give themselves to God.

28. Strategic Planning

As prophetic people, we are called to co-create the future with God. Strategic planning allows a group such as a congregation or a mission center to actively engage together in listening and responding to God's call. A mission statement is a group's expression of this future. It is the group's understanding of who they are, who they serve, why they exist, and what they value. As the group listens to God in shaping the group's mission, they also discern how the future will look different from the present because the group has been faithful to the mission. A vision statement is a group's expression of what the future will look like if the group is successful in accomplishing their mission.

With the group's sight set on their vision and enthused by their mission, the group sets out to determine how they might use their giftedness in meeting specific needs in their area that will help them achieve their mission and vision. This step requires the group to identify their gifts as well as recognizing how those gifts might be used for responding to God's call. Matching gifts to God's call is reflected in the development of the group's strategies. Undoubtedly, the group will sense that there are more strategies than can be accomplished in the near term. Thus, the group listens to God's call in trying to understand how to decide where to begin. An action plan is the prioritized list of objectives and targets for each strategy that defines how the group will faithfully respond to God's call. Then the group begins the journey together. Along this journey, the group periodically pauses to listen to God's course directions and to reflect on how the group is doing. This is strategic planning or discerning God's will in planning church mission.

There are many different models for strategic planning. At the time of this writing, appreciative inquiry and asset-based planning are two of the better models available. Several references books a group might consider using include the following:

- *Strategic Planning for Churches: An Appreciative Approach* by Charles Elliot (Christian Ministry Resources)
- *The Power of Asset Mapping: Acting on Your Congregation's Strengths* by Luther K. Snow (The Alban Institute)
- *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations* by Michael Allison and Jude Kay (John Wiley and Sons, Inc.)
- *Seeking and Doing God's Will* by Garrie Stevens, Pamela Lardear, and Sharon Duger (Discipleship Resources)
- *Holy Conversations* by Gil Rendle and Alice Mann (The Alban Institute)

Additional resources can be found through the Alban Institute Web site (*www.alban.org*), which is an excellent source for strategic planning and other church leadership material for congregations.

The key is to choose a model that feels appropriate to the group and that recognizes the group's need to partner with God in creating the plan. Regardless of the strategic planning model selected, the process can be summarized as follows: First, leaders and the group must set up for success. This includes making sure that the group has a common agreement on what they want to do, why they want to do it, what they are hoping to achieve, and how they will proceed. This can also be seen as making a commitment to plan.

Second, the group must define their challenge. This includes discerning their mission and vision. This also includes prayerfully identifying their giftedness and considering how God is calling them to share that giftedness in the community.

Third, the group must set the course. This means identifying strategies, objectives, targets, and means and methods. A strategy is a holistic statement of a group's strategic orientation in accomplishing the goals of the church. Strategies may take multiple years to achieve. A group's mission, vision, and strategies are generally collected in the strategic or mission plan.

Objectives are key areas of focus in a given fiscal year toward which effort is directed in order to achieve a strategy. Accomplishment of objectives is assessed by measuring progress toward achieving targets for specific indicators. Targets are the desired state to be achieved by a particular, typically numeric in nature. Measuring progress toward the target allows assessment of the accomplishment of an objective. Means and methods are specific tasks, projects, or processes that are accomplished in order to achieve the objective. The best test of means and methods will be their ability to move an identified objective closer to its target. The objectives, targets, and means and methods for a given fiscal year are typically collected in an annual action plan.

The fourth major element of strategic planning is keeping the plan relevant. This entails implementing the annual action plan. It also includes monitoring and evaluating your success in completing the action plan and in how well the action plan helps the group succeed in its strategic plan. Monitoring and evaluating allows a group to pause and reflect, to see God's blessings in the process, to seek God's guidance in making adjustments in the journey, and to remain faithful in responding to God's call.

Prophetic people cannot *predict* the future. Prophetic people can help *shape* the future by listening, discerning, planning, responding, and reflecting.

29. Conflict in the Church

For purposes of this article, conflict will be defined as a potential hurtful difference between two or more people. God has created each of us as unique beings; thus we have a multitude of differences—personalities, gifts and talents, preferences in foods and music, theology, beliefs, and values.

As members of a congregation interact with each other these differences are bound to come into tension. That tension can be good. It can be the impetus for growth—spiritually and numerically. It can also cause rifts in relationships. If not addressed in ways that uphold the worth of each of the persons involved, the differences escalate to destructive results.

Too often people call for assistance when the conflict is ten to fifty years old. The administrators are usually not those who were present or involved in the original rift. Usually the conflict has at its core individuals who have felt offended, hurt, unrecognized, or unacknowledged in some past occurrence in the congregation. The leaders at the time the offense occurred may have hoped it would "just blow over," and the obvious manifestation of the conflict may have disappeared, while in reality the conflict was subtly rearing its head in a variety of ways over the years. Needless to say, conflicts that have that much history take a great deal of time and outside intervention to work through.

Steps for dealing with conflict:

A. Be proactive!
   - Enhance and develop your own personal skills in dealing with differences (see list of available trainings from Peacebuilding Specialist office at the end of this article).
   - Involve the congregation in taking conflict resolution skills trainings (see list of available trainings from Peacebuilding specialist office at the end of this article).
   - Name the concerns out loud when they first appear—don't sweep them under the rug. For example, "There have been concerns expressed about youth activity in the foyer during the service. We will take time on ___ to share perspectives about this concern."

B. Contact the peacebuilding specialist to consult on options for dealing with differences. Call sooner rather than later.

C. Expect people to address their concerns and differences with each other in a direct, timely, and compassionate manner.

D. Call the peacebuilding specialist if people are unable to resolve their differences by themselves.

E. Create an environment in which expressing differing perspectives is safe and encouraged.

Here is the most important advice for any administrator and member of a congregation: **Address the differences early before they become irreconcilable.** The peacebuilding specialist is pleased to have people call and consult regarding differences between members. Early intervention can benefit the life of the congregation and the mission of the church. No disagreement is too small or inconsequential to call about. For more information, the peacebuilding specialist has a handbook that is available upon request.

Conflicts in the church are not just about the visible issues. People bring baggage from their families of origin—family system issues. They come to the church often unconsciously looking to heal from gaps in their nurturing in their families of origin. Just because an individual is pastor does not exclude him or her from the human baggage common to all people. Not only do people have conflicts about identifiable issues from current events, they often have historical baggage from their own life journey. Leaders need to take a special look at the historical baggage in their own lives and in their lives in the church community to see how aspects of their lives, past and present, impact any conflict situation they are dealing with.

We call the church community our family, and the dynamics of family systems are apparent in the church family. Consciously and unconsciously we all come to the church family seeking ways to heal the wounds of life. Sometimes the wounds are so deep the congregation is ill equipped to handle the individual's needs. In some instances the individual's behavior becomes problematic. Arthur Boers in *Never Call Them Jerks: Healthy Responses to Difficult Behavior* states:

> **"Difficult behavior" is not conflict, criticism, argument, or occasional irrationality, all of which leaders can expect as a normal part of our work. "Difficult behavior" is not that which "pushes one's buttons." After all, people react variously to vastly different circumstances, as temperament and personality inventories show. We all have different "buttons." "Difficult behavior" is patterned and sustained behavior that is abusive, irrational, hostile, adversarial, or distorted. It reflects the kinds of problematic behavior and distorted thinking enumerated in the Level III through V (contest, fight/flight, intractable) categories of conflict.**

Boer presents ways that leaders can deal with difficult behavior such that the worth of each person is upheld. He also discusses skills and self-care practices that leaders need to cultivate in order to compassionately and healthily address the "difficult behaviors" of others; for example, self-differentiation, non-anxious presence, dealing with triangulation, "tuning our own harp strings," developing support persons.

The following bibliography of trainings and books are recommended to assist leaders in their efforts to deal with potentially hurtful differences, etc.

Trainings available through the Peacebuilding Specialist's office:

Interpersonal Peacemaking
Listening Ear
Group Facilitation
Consensus Decision-making

Books:

Augsburger, David. *Caring Enough to Confront: How to Understand and Express Your Depest Feelings Towards Others.* Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1973.

Boers, Arthur Paul. *Never Call Them Jerks: Healthy Responses to Difficult Behavior.* Washington, D.C.: Alban Institute, 1999. ISBN 1-5669-9218-4

Friedman, Edwin H. *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue.* New York: Guilford Press, 1985. ISBN 0-8986-2059-7

Gilbert, Roberta M., M.D. *Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking about Human Interactions.* New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1992. ISBN 0-4713-4690-X

Miller, Jeffrey A. *The Anxious Organization: Why Smart Companies Do Dumb Things.* Facts on Demand Press, 2002. ISBN 1-88915-0339

Steinke, Peter L. *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach.* Bethesda, Maryland: Alban Institute, 1996. ISBN 1-5669-9173-0

World Church Peacebuilding Specialist:

Phone: (816) 833-1000 ext. 1353
Fax: (816) 521-3016
E-mail: *sgamet@CofChrist.org*

30. Diversity

The human community is composed of a rainbow of colors and a rich variety different attitudes/beliefs, abilities, and orientations. Perhaps the greatest challenge each one of us has is to learn to appreciate, value, and respect those differences

> **Listen carefully to the many testimonies of those around the world who have been led into the fellowship of the Community of Christ. The richness of cultures, the poetry of language, and the breadth of human experience permit the gospel to be seen with new eyes and grasped with freshness of spirit. That gift has been given to you. Do not fail to understand its power. It is for divine purpose that you have been given the struggles as well as the joys of diversity. So must it always be in the peaceable kingdom.**
>
> **—Doctrine and Covenants 162:4a-b**

Key to any consideration of diversity is the need to understand and respect each individual. Initially, understanding begins with open-mindedness and honest communication. Asking questions to discover how others feel and want to be treated clarifies the understandings. Then utilizing the understandings in behaviors that are respectful creates a foundation for positive relationships. The benefits to be gained from seeking to understand and respect others are numerous.

In community, church, or organizational settings, respectful dialogue teaches each about the other's motivations, values, and needs. It is through this process of education that each learns to appreciate the other and personal friendships are built. Finding commonalities through shared relationships avoids stereotyping, communicates respect, and bridges the differences that keep people separated.

There are many ways to learn about others. Here are some possibilities:

1. Build relationships with those who are different from you.
2. Seek out community resources that are representative of diversity.
3. Read or study other cultures or life experiences.
4. Observe without judgment.
5. Talk with others to seek and share understanding.
6. Empower diverse others to be equal decision-makers and partners in your congregation and community.

There are resources available through the World Church for congregational education, dialogue, and advocacy. For more information contact the Council of Twelve office.

The congregational leader can facilitate the accepting and embracing of diversity in many ways. Initially it is important to educate congregational members in the differences between people, how their attitudes toward others impact their outreach potentials. Resources are available from the World Church for diversity education. There are also many resources available in the community—bookstores, the Internet, and some specialized not-for-profit organizations.

Do a congregational assessment to see how the congregational culture invites or alienates potential diverse friends. Who do the pictures posted around the building represent? Are various ethnicities represented or are they all white and middle class? Do the Sunday school materials have many diverse people characterized, or are they of a homogeneous group? Look closely at your congregation without your own cultural glasses. What do you see?

It is important to identify potential future leaders among the diverse individuals who participate in the congregation. Efforts should be made to mentor and develop the individu-

als. Make sure they are represented on congregational committees so their voice can be heard.

And finally, learn to share the decision-making power with diverse others. This can only be accomplished by truly treating as equals those who are not members of the dominant culture. The journey may take some time, but with effort your congregation can grow into an inviting place, and its members will be blessed in many ways.

31. Communicating as a Church Leader

We communicate all the time, every day, with everybody. Church leaders, on either the congregational or mission center level, may find that almost every task or project they carry out requires communication. If we don't say what we mean, the result is miscommunication. If the other person doesn't understand what we say, no communication takes place. Good communication skills are essential, not only in the work of the church, but in the lives of individuals as well. Without good communication skills, many jobs are performed the wrong way or not at all.

Before attempting to communicate your ideas or instructions, be sure to clarify them in your own mind. Be clear about the purpose of the communication as well as the intended outcome. For example, are you attempting to inform others, to obtain information, or to initiate action? Then allow form to follow function by using the most appropriate means to communicate, whether verbal or written, and assess the best delivery system.

Before you put your fingers to the keyboard or step up to the microphone, decide exactly what you want to get across to the membership and work out a plan for the message that will do the job. The message and the plan can vary enormously: it might be an elaborate and complicated chart of ministry plans for the congregation, an article for the church newsletter, a report for a congregational Web site, or it might be three major points that you wish to convey at a business meeting. Regardless of the method, size, or difficulty of the communication, the basic principles remain the same: know what you are going to say and plan how you will say it.

Communications have a wide variety of purposes:

- sharing information or knowledge
- persuading others to take action
- expressing sympathy or support
- persuading others to reject one set of ideas for another
- entertaining or amusing an audience
- encouraging and upholding others
- stimulating others
- providing assurance and creating harmony

Effective communication requires skill. It takes time and effort to be a good communicator. Use the ideas and suggestions listed here and practice your skills:

- Before engaging in any form of communication decide what you want to say and plan how you want to convey it.
- Once your purpose is clarified, you have eliminated the greatest cause of wasted effort and confusion, for both yourself and your congregation or mission center.
- Improve your writing by planning articles, paragraphs, and even sentences in advance.
- Efficiency is a basic principle. Convey your message as briefly and clearly as possible.
- Use illustrations, but keep them subordinate to words.
- When writing, think about the "reader over your shoulder."

Good writing involves more than merely putting words on a page. Many books on writing techniques are available that will help novice as well as experienced writers improve their writing abilities.

Written communication has many advantages—we have time to consider our words, edit the expression of our thoughts, and make sure we convey the intended message. Verbal communication, by contrast, does not provide us with these comforts. Verbal communication might be delivered one-on-one, before a church committee or meeting, as a church service announcement, or at a congregational business meeting or a mission center conference. Regardless of the scope of the communication or the size of the audience, there are basic skills that will enhance the delivery of your message:

- Make sure the other person is listening before you start speaking. Make eye contact or sit in their line of vision before you start.
- Be an attentive listener. When you're talking, you're sharing something you already know. When you're listening, you may learn something new. To understand others, concentrate, ask questions, take notes, and avoid distractions. Be aware of their tone of voice, facial expression, body movement, voice volume, and other clues. Good listening includes attentiveness to both verbal and nonverbal clues.
- Slow your speech down. Most people speak too quickly, making if difficult for people to understand what is being said. This also leaves the speaker with little time to gather thoughts effectively. Consciously slowing down your speech, within reason, will calm you and give you the chance to engage in more meaningful dialogue.
- Speak clearly and accurately. Saying specifically what you mean leaves little room for miscommunication. Say what you mean, how you feel, what you want, and what you think if that's what you want the other person to hear.

- Answering questions or inquiries on the spot may indicate your expertise, but often leaders create problems by answering a difficult question too quickly. Serious matters require some degree of reflection. Let others know that is what you intend to do.

Be aware that you will need different communication strategies for different groups and different situations. Take advantage of the many options available for communication: e-mail, Web postings, newsletters, bulletin inserts, signboards, local newspapers, and local publications. For additional information on communicating your public relations message to the community, contact Communications Services at World Church headquarters.

32. Communicating in a Crisis

Preparing for the response to a crisis before one occurs minimizes stress and confusion while maximizing competence, courtesy, and personal care for those involved, as well as the congregation/mission center and community as a whole. The following crisis communication plan helps assure that crucial information is delivered with as much accuracy and timeliness as possible under the circumstances.

The possible crises that might face church leaders fall into general categories. The categories and examples cited here attempt to anticipate the kinds of crises that are possible or likely, helping to remove the element of surprise and provide more complete preparation. They might include, but not be limited, to the following examples:

- Natural disasters (flooding, tornadoes, wildfires)
- Criminal or legal action (priesthood, staff member, volunteer, member, or friend of the church charged with a crime, sexual harassment lawsuit, or other action brought against the individual or the church)
- Violent acts, demonstrations, death, or violent injuries (hostage situation, demonstration against church policies, member or staff injured or killed)
- Personnel crises (resignation or firing of staff member, staff member hospitalized)
- Financial crises (embezzlement by a staff member or volunteer, failure of a bank that holds congregational funds, sharp drop in congregational or mission center income)

Conferring with the mission center officers in times of crisis communication is imperative. Congregational leaders should always keep the mission center officers apprised of crisis situations or potential crises. Mission center officers should always consult with the Council of Twelve, and then the Presiding Bishopric, Legal Services, Risk Management, Human Resources, and Communication Services as circumstances would deem appropriate.

Church leadership should respond promptly to those impacted by a crisis as well as the media, when necessary. The communication goal is to provide accurate information, ministry, and maintain the integrity of the church. Avoid panic, rumor, and speculation by controlling the flow of information. All work carried out within a crisis communication plan should be marked by openness, accessibility, truthfulness, and responsiveness, reinforcing the role of the church as a caring and compassionate ministry.

The following communication strategies are designed to assist leadership in implementing a coordinated response:

- Gather facts about the crisis.
- Report the crisis to mission center and headquarters officials through appropriate channels. A situation analysis may include, but not be limited to, the scope of the situation, any legal implications, the public's perception, and other related events (past and future).
- Designate an appropriate spokesperson; for consistency, all communication should flow through the spokesperson.
- Without delay, develop the key message to be conveyed as well as the target audience to receive the communication. A key message allows leadership to present a particular viewpoint on the information that is released.
- Leaders may choose to form a crisis team to carry out specific duties such as gathering information, notifying families and others involved, dealing with emergency officials, and communicating with volunteers and staff.
- Depending upon the particular crisis and time constraints, leaders should make use of as many communication tools as are available and appropriate: e-mail, fax, letter sent by regular mail, newsletter, telephone, and Web site.
- Any communication of the key message to the media should be approved by the mission center officer(s) and be delivered or released through the designated spokesperson.
- Basic principles should guide any communication with public media:
    1. Answer all questions as directly and briefly as possible, in a positive manner.
    2. The spokesperson must be accessible to reporters.
    3. Provide supplemental information in the form of fact sheets.
    4. Do not argue with reporters.
    5. Never speak "off the record."
    6. Avoid speculations and allocations of blame.
    7. Avoid delaying any responses to a media request.
    8. Avoid church and ecclesiastical jargon.
    9. When an answer is not available, never say "no comment." Explain that to the reporter and promise

to call back within a specified time frame. Then be sure to follow through.

When the crisis is over, say so, clearly, and then do not linger on it. Move on, modeling healthy and up-front behavior. Encourage others to do so as well.

Remember that you need to communicate with all parts of the congregation/mission center more than once on any issue in order to make an impact. Make sure all people feel involved in the issues at hand.

33. Supporting Denominational Initiatives

It is understandable and admirable that as an administrator in a local jurisdiction, you are always conscious of the needs of your area and your responsibilities there. But your responsibilities and opportunities are much broader than that. Yours is not just an isolated congregation trying to maintain its own health and functioning. You are an integral part of a worldwide church that fulfills its divine mission through the cooperative functioning at the local level.

The corporate goals are only accomplished to the degree that the congregations are working toward those objectives. As a part of your ordination and acceptance of an administrative position, you accepted the responsibility of keeping up to date on current church objectives, church-sponsored events and programming, and available resources. You are the key person who introduces and explains programming to your people, who encourages and assists them to attend events, and who introduces the resources that will assist them and their congregations.

You are the link to the World Church, and in that part of your role you are essentially an advocate and representative of the World Church. If local administrators fail in this functioning, the church will fail in accomplishing its mission. Help your congregation experience the energy of knowing that it is playing its part in the prophetic vision of pursuing peace, reconciliation, and healing of the spirit.

Appendices

I. Policy Statements

The following statements of policy are among those most often requested by pastors, mission center presidents, and priesthood members. They are provided for the benefit of the church and are current as of the date of publication of this edition of the *Church Administrator's Handbook.*

A. The Lord's Supper

As we have previously communicated in pastor mailings and the pages of the *Saints Herald* (June 1994, pages 3-4), the 1994 World Conference took action to remove the legislative prohibition on serving the Lord's Supper to persons who are not baptized members of the Community of Christ.

Our "Letter of Pastoral Counsel" to the World Conference and an accompanying editorial have been published in the June *Herald* (pages 3-4) as direction to the church in this matter.

In general, these statements affirm that we will now offer the Lord's Supper to any who choose to partake of it in accordance with their own faith and practice. This is effective immediately. However, the change in procedure does not modify our current understanding of the Lord's Supper as representative of the life and sacrifice of the Christ and as a renewal of our baptismal covenant.

In the months ahead we expect to engage in a churchwide dialogue on this and many other related issues. We are confident that this process will be enriching and instructive to us all.

We recognize that there are a number of questions, many of them hypothetical, in the minds of pastors and other church administrators who must deal with this change in our practice, particularly in places where members are concerned about the Conference action. We do not want to write policies that attempt to cover every possible circumstance, but only to suggest the spirit by which individual decisions can be made. We hope these additional guidelines will be useful in responding to such questions.

Guidelines for Administration of the Lord's Supper

1. The Lord's Supper is a Christian sacrament, rich in meaning and purpose, which calls us to remember the life and sacrifice of our Lord. In that sense, it speaks most powerfully to those who have made a covenant with Christ, a relationship usually established through water baptism.
2. In administering the Lord's Supper, however, the principle that we will follow is that the emblems will be passed to all worship participants and they will be free to partake at their own initiative. No attempt should be made to determine whether persons have been baptized in some other church or whether the form of baptism is consistent with our own. The choice is with the individual.
3. In the case of children who are members of our own church families, they will be invited to receive the Lord's Supper upon baptism and confirmation, which occurs after reaching the age of accountability (eight years of age or older). Occasionally, there may be children of other faiths in attendance with church families. In such cases, it would be appropriate to share privately with the visitors that our own tradition is to offer the Lord's Supper to children after baptism at age eight or above. Most people will respect that practice, but it remains an individual choice.
4. Many congregations have among their regular participants people who have chosen not to be baptized as a member of the Community of Christ, usually on the grounds that a previous baptism in another faith is sufficient. In such cases, pastors are encouraged to visit personally with them and to explain the new procedure, inviting them to receive the emblems at our Communion services. This personal invitation may be particularly useful in assuring them that they are not only permitted but welcome to share in this way.
5. In recognition of the change in practice, some pastors may choose, at least for a while, to make a public statement of invitation and explanation before serving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We do not wish to be prescriptive in this matter and would leave it to individual judgment as to whether such a statement would be useful and appropriate. We offer the following suggestion as a model for the type of statement that could be made:

> The tradition of the Community of Christ is to understand the Lord's Supper as a sacrament in which we remember the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ and renew the covenant we made at the waters of baptism.
>
> Others who share with us may have different understandings and practices within their own faith and tradition. We invite all who participate to do so as an expression of the

faithful unity and love exemplified in the life of Jesus Christ, in whose name we worship.

6. In all of our church life we seek to be governed by the sustaining presence of the Holy Spirit, which instructs in places where policies and guidelines may not. We continue to affirm that those who preside over our congregations and worship services are called to do so in accordance with the leadings of the Spirit (Doctrine and Covenants 17:9). Their pastoral judgment should be respected in situations where further interpretation may be required.

We intend to take very seriously the instruction of Doctrine and Covenants 158:llc that we "look especially to the sacraments to enrich the spiritual life of the body." We are called to seek a greater understanding of divine purpose in these sacred traditions and are assured that we will be blessed with a confirming assurance of God's Spirit in our worship and study. As we make these adjustments in our administration of the Lord's Supper, we are confident that our people will do so in good spirit and with a desire to demonstrate our essential unity through Christ Jesus.

—First Presidency statement published in the Saints Herald (August 1994, pages 3-4), adapted for name change

B. Prayers for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

The sacraments of the church are essential expressions of our unity as a worldwide fellowship. Sacramental practice that provides for using essentially the same forms and words church-wide (albeit in various languages) reinforces a sense of togetherness in the context of wide diversity.

We interpret the intent of World Conference Resolution 1282, approved on April 3, 2004, as calling for the preparation of alternate prayers that retain the overall structure and content of those found in Section 17 of the Doctrine and Covenants. In this way the church-wide use of common forms and wording is preserved.

In recent years, some Communion services have been providing for the wine to be served immediately following the bread. This is done either as the servers take the emblems to the congregation or as the congregation comes forward to receive. Where this is done, the reading of two separate prayers, one right after the other, can be awkward. For this reason, we believe that the needs of the church will be well served by having a combined prayer that can be used when the emblems are served together. Such prayers, one using the Doctrine and Covenants language and the other the more contemporary wording, are also provided at this time.

The resolution calls for use of "contemporary language." The attempt has been to replace archaic language with wording that is in current use; this includes gender-specific references to God.

These new prayers will have equal status to those found in Section 17 of the Doctrine and Covenants. In Communion services of the Community of Christ, the prayers found in Section 17 of the Doctrine and Covenants and the prayers given here in contemporary English (and their equivalent translations in other languages) are the only ones authorized for use. Those appointed to read the prayers are not free to use other wording.

The following prayers are now offered for use in the church, in addition to those found in Doctrine and Covenants 17:22 and 23.

Blessing on the Bread

Eternal God, we ask you in the name of your Son Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who receive it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of your Son, and witness to you, O God, that they are willing to take upon them the name of your Son, and always remember him, and keep the commandments which he has given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

Blessing on the Wine

Eternal God, we ask you in the name of your Son Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this wine to the souls of all those who receive it, that they may drink in remembrance of the blood of your Son which was shed for them, that they may witness to you, O God, that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

Combined Prayer on the Bread and Wine (Based on Doctrine and Covenants 17)

O God, the eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread and wine to the souls of all those who partake of them, that they may eat and drink in remembrance of the body and blood of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

Combined Prayer on the Bread and Wine (Contemporary Language)

Eternal God, we ask you in the name of your Son Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread and wine to the souls of all those who receive them, that they may eat and drink in remembrance of the body and blood of your Son, and witness to you, O God, that they are willing to take upon them the name of your Son, and always remember him and keep the commandments which he has given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

—First Presidency statement published in the *Herald* (November 2004)

C. Scripture in the Community of Christ

We are pleased to present to the church the following paper titled "Scripture in the Community of Christ." This has been prepared by the Theology Task Force with input from the World Church Leadership Council. The statement is presented for reflection and study by the church, a process that could lead to further refinements as the result of our experience with it.

This foundational set of affirmations provides the context for the church's continuing quest to become more knowledgeable about our three books of scripture. The focus is on how we understand scripture and its role in the life of the church.

Study of and reflection on these affirmations will assist us all in our prayerful consideration and use of the scriptural witness. With this in mind, we have added some questions to aid in an exploration of these affirmations.

—*The First Presidency* (June 2003)

Scripture provides divine guidance and inspired insight for life when responsibly interpreted and faithfully applied. Scripture helps us believe in Jesus Christ. Its witness guides us to eternal life and enables us to grow spiritually, to transform our lives, and to participate actively in the life and ministry of the church.

1. We declare that Jesus Christ—who lived, was crucified, was raised from the dead, and comes again—is the Living Word of God. It is to Christ that scripture points. It is through Christ that we have life (John 5:39–40). It is Christ whom we must hear (Mark 9:7).

2. We find the Living Word in and through scripture. Scripture is the indispensable witness of the saving, transforming message that God has entrusted to the church. The church formed the canon of scripture so that it might always have a way to hear the good news, nurture its faith, measure its life, test its experience, and remember its identity.

3. Scripture is a library of books that speaks in many voices. These books were written in diverse times and places, and reflect the languages, cultures, and conditions under which they were written. God's revelation through scripture does not come to us apart from the humanity of the writers, but in and through that humanity. In the earthen vessels of scripture we have been given the treasure of divine love and grace (2 Corinthians 4:7).

4. Scripture's authority is derived from the model of Christ, who came to be a servant (Mark 10:45). Therefore, the authority of scripture is not the authority to oppress, control, or dominate. If Jesus came to serve, how much more should the books that point to him be treated as a servant of the saving purposes of God.

5. Scripture is vital and essential to the church, but not because it is inerrant (in the sense that every detail is historically or scientifically correct). Scripture makes no such claim for itself. Rather, generations of Christians have found scripture simply to be trustworthy in keeping them anchored in revelation, in promoting faith in Christ, and in nurturing the life of discipleship. For these purposes, scripture is unfailingly reliable (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

6. Faith, experience, tradition, and scholarship each have something to contribute to our understanding of scripture. In wrestling to hear and respond to the witness of scripture, the church must value the light that each of these sources may offer.

7. As the church tries to interpret scripture responsibly, it seeks the help of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that the Spirit would guide his disciples into new truth (John 16:12–15). By the Spirit, the ancient words of scripture can become revelatory; allowing us to grasp what may not have been seen or heard before.

8. Disciples are called to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the scriptures so that they may ever increase in love for God, neighbor, and self (Matthew 22:37–40; Mosiah 1:49), uphold the dignity and worth of all persons (Doctrine and Covenants 16:3c–d), and faithfully follow the Way of Jesus Christ.

9. With other Christians, we affirm the Bible as the foundational scripture for the church. In addition, the Community of Christ uses the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants as scripture. We do not use these sacred writings to replace the witness of the Bible or improve upon it, but because they confirm its message that Jesus Christ is the Living Word of God (Preface of the Book of Mormon; Doctrine and Covenants 76:3g). We have heard Christ speak in all three books of scripture, and bear witness that he is "alive forever and ever" (Revelation 1:18).

10. For our time we shall seek to live and interpret the witness of scripture *by* the Spirit, *with* the community, *for the sake of* mission, *in the name of* the Prince of Peace.

—Theology Task Force (May 3, 2003)
With the concurrence of the World Church Leadership Council (May 12, 2003)

D. Community, Common Consent, and the Issue of Homosexuality

The World Church Leadership Council met in a retreat setting September 15–19, 2002. During that time extensive attention was given to implementation of the sharing goal, inter-quorum functions and relationships, review of budget projections, and a variety of other significant issues. The Council also participated in a discussion of the church's processing of the homosexuality dialogue since the 2002 World Conference. From those reflections the Council developed the following statement as further guidance to the church on this sensitive and important matter.

The church has been called to a loving and respectful dialogue on the difficult and often divisive issue of homosexuality. We have traveled to scores of camps and reunions this summer and are aware that many people are troubled by the questions and conflicted over how to handle them. We are saddened by the pain and confusion that some are feeling. As church leaders we are determined to both grapple prophetically with issues before us and yet process them in a way that honors our community and the principles of common consent that govern us. Such challenges have confronted the church in every generation.

If the church is to be faithful to the demands of the gospel it will often be called beyond the boundaries of certainty to explore its implications in a complex world. We are deeply committed to seeking God's direction and embodying the life and ministry of Jesus in our own personal ministry and in the lived-out witness of the church. Even while doing so, God's people are also called to live together in love and to embrace the rich diversity of our global family. A creative and challenging tension will always exist between the desire for unity within the body and the need to press the limits of our understanding. We embrace both those principles in exploring the issue of homosexuality within our community.

In terms of policy we are aware that some are concerned that a few exceptions have been made to the 1982 Standing High Council statement guidelines that have governed us in the matter of homosexuality and ordination. That discomfort is shared by all of us in leadership, even in our awareness of the exceptions and the human and pastoral issues surrounding them.

As indicated by President W. Grant McMurray in his 2002 World Conference sermon we are asked to seek issues on which we can agree and shape dialogue in areas where we do not agree. As we continue this exploration we want the church to know that we will follow the provisions of the 1982 guidelines regarding calling and ordination. (*Note:* These guidelines provide that all persons are welcome in the fellowship of the church. With regard to the ordination, those with a homosexual orientation may be ordained provided they are celibate.) This will not affect those ordinations that have been previously provided for, even if they were exceptions to the guidelines. We will not make further exceptions to the guidelines on calling and ordination unless they are adjusted through the common consent of the people.

In terms of further processing and dialogue, we understand very well that various areas of the church need to approach the matter differently. In some nations it is not possible to even discuss it because of cultural and legal issues. In other places, regardless of how individuals may feel, the question is very much a part of the culture in which the church is ministering and we have no choice but to talk together about it. Each field apostle, in consultation with local leaders, will be responsible for determining whether that field will participate in the dialogue and what methods will be used. The World Church staff specializing in conflict resolution is designing a dialogue process that can be adapted to each area as appropriate. This process honors all viewpoints and provides abundant time and opportunity for each perspective to be heard and understood.

In our deliberations within the World Church Leadership Council we focused primarily on how we can effectively implement the two components of the sharing goal: "Each one, reach one" and "Honor God's call to tithe." This

is fundamental to the fulfillment of our church's mission. There will always be issues upon which substantial disagreement will exist among faithful members of our community. Our task as a community of God's people is to invite all to share in the fellowship, respect one another in our diversity, listen and learn from each other in love, and look beyond the things that may divide us to embrace our essential unity in Jesus Christ. The church has been counseled that "the path will not always be easy, the choices will not always be clear," but we have also been promised that "the cause is sure and the Spirit will bear witness to the truth, and those who live the truth will know the hope and the joy of discipleship in the community of Christ" (Doctrine and Covenants 161:7).

As church leaders we live willingly in the tension between certainty and the demands of faith. We proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and pledge anew to work tirelessly to build the communities of joy, hope, love, and peace that are at the heart of our mission. To do so requires openness and transparency, unconditional love and respect for one another, and a willingness to rely on the leadings and assurance of the Holy Spirit in all things. We commit our personal ministry and our collective leadership to that end.

—World Church Leadership Council (September 2002)

E. Abortion

1. We affirm our faith in God, and in the fellowship of the church, as the work of God among us and within us and the context within which decisions about abortion should be made.
2. We affirm our shared humanity, and common need for redemption and reconciliation to God and to one another. We affirm that life is a gift from God and the stewardship of life is a sacred trust.
3. We affirm that parenthood is partnership with God in the creative processes of the universe.
4. We affirm the necessity for parents to make responsible decisions regarding the conception and nurture of their children.
5. We affirm a profound regard for the personhood of the woman in her emotional, mental, and physical health; we also affirm a profound regard and concern for the potential of the unborn fetus.
6. We affirm that there is an inadequacy in simplistic answers that regard all abortions as murder, or, on the other hand, regard abortion only as a medical procedure without moral significance.
7. We affirm the right of the woman to make her own decision regarding the continuation or termination of problem pregnancies. It is our recommendation that this decision be made with the support of family and in consultation with medical, ministerial, and professional counseling services.
8. We affirm that jurisdictional leaders need to be cognizant of competent counseling resources and available women's health care services in the areas to which our members may be referred both during the process of decision and following.

The church is aware that there are occasions which make it necessary, because of the conditions of the conception or pregnancy, to terminate a particular pregnancy. While we recognize a woman's basic right to self-determination, we are also committed to placing a high value on the preservation of life as a principle of moral behavior. In its teaching and caring ministries, the church seeks to provide premarital preparation and to nurture faithful marriage relationships. There are, however, ethical choices in which the church, while emphasizing basic Christian principles, is called to support individuals in exercising their free moral agency as they engage in responsible decision.

*—Standing High Council (January 24, 1974;
Revised March 19, 1998)*

F. Prophecies and Inspirational Utterances

The law of the church provides that all revelatory manifestations affecting the World Church in matters of doctrine, polity, and practice shall come through the prophet-president. Before becoming law to govern the church, these are subjected to scrutiny and adoption by the various ministerial quorums and councils and by the World Conference.

Matters of local administration are not to be conducted by manifestations of the Spirit (Doctrine and Covenants 125:15).

Prophecies, inspirational utterances, or other spiritual manifestations enjoyed by individuals or shared during congregational services should not be put into manuscript or printed form, audio or video taped, or circulated for any public purpose. Only the First Presidency gives consent for the publication and circulation of materials not supported by World Conference action.

—adapted from Joint Council Minutes (March 8, 1922)

G. Records

Files on problem cases such as divorces, confessions, court cases, and priesthood silences should not be kept locally, but should be forwarded to the office of the First Presidency for filing. The files will be made available to the proper officials on request.

H. Business Enterprises

Church members should avoid the characterization of any private business enterprise as having church sanction or being of particular benefit to other church members. This issue has been addressed by World Conference resolutions and by actions of the Standing High Council. The most recent statement is reprinted in the section of this handbook on priesthood.

Community of Christ

Request for Withdrawal of Church Membership

TO: THE FIRST PRESIDENCY
I desire to withdraw from membership in the Community of Christ. The reason for my request is:

____

____

____

____

Please remove my name from church records:

Signature:________________________________

Print/Type Full Name:__________________________

(Maiden Name): _____________________________

Register #:________________________________

Address: .. _______________________________

*** TO BE FILLED IN BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER***

Ministerial contact has been made, and I have determined that the person named above does in fact desire to withdraw.

____________ ____________________________
(Date) (Pastor)

____________ ____________________________
(Date) (Mission Center President)

COMMENTS:____

____

NOTE TO MEMBER: The church requires a signed request from each person requesting withdrawal. This form should be given to your pastor for processing. Questions may be addressed to the World Church Secretary, Community of Christ, 1001 W. Walnut, Independence, MO 64050.

NOTE TO ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS: Withdrawal requests should be signed by the pastor or the mission center president. A signature indicates acknowledgment of the desire of the member to withdraw.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ORDINATION FORM

I recommend ______________________________________Register Number _________________________

For ordination to the office of ____

Candidate's residence (address) ____

Currently enrolled in (congregation) ____

Date of birth: _____________________________Sex____________Vocation _________________________

Approximate number of years as: Church Member_______________Priesthood__________________

Any previous priesthood offices held ____

Current marital status, approximate number of years: Married________Single _______________________

Check if candidate has to your knowledge ever been: Widowed ________Divorced____________________

Spouse is member of: Community of Christ________Other church or faith ________None_____________

Spouse will be comfortable with this call: Highly___________Fairly___________Little_________________

Education (show graduation or degree, or number of years attended):

Elementary ________________High School_______________Four-Year College_____________

Postgraduate Work ______________Other Training _________________

Further training needed for this office: Extensive __________Moderate __________Little _____________

As pastor (or other appropriate administrative officer), I present this recommendation as my own serious conviction of this call.

Signature____

Official Capacity ____

Congregation__________________________Date ___________________

Approved by:
Mission Center President____Date __________________

(*Note:* This call should be discussed only with proper administrative officers or others who will not share confidential information. Send this form to the mission center president. *DO NOT APPROACH THE CANDIDATE ABOUT THE CALL UNTIL YOU HAVE RECEIVED CLEARANCE TO DO SO.*]

Conviction concerning the candidate's call came to me as pastor/mission center president in this manner (general conviction, any special feelings or experiences):

Priesthood Standards and Qualifications

(To be completed by officer initiating the call and also to be used when the candidate is approached about the call.)

The following qualities and factors should be considered when reviewing the history and call of the candidate. Be sensitive to anything that might be a problem in acceptance or ministry of the candidate. Make a brief notation, or if necessary explain on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Do you have a conviction that this person is being called to priesthood function in the Community of Christ?

2. What are the gifts and potential for ministry evident in this person's life for immediate and long-term ministry? How do they relate to a calling of a specific office?

3. Is there need in the congregation or in other church settings for this person's ministry?

4. How will this ordination affect the balance of ministry according to priesthood offices in the congregation?

5. Is this person affirmative in testimony and positive in support of all levels of church life: congregation, mission center, and World Church?

6. Is this person's life currently "in order" in regard to personal relationships, morality, response to the principles of personal stewardship and finances?

7. If the person has been divorced, has inquiry been made regarding the circumstances?

8. Does this candidate exhibit good stewardship of health and hold high standards of behavior, avoiding the abuse of chemical substances and refraining from the use of alcohol and tobacco?

9. Does the candidate actively support the church to the best of his or her ability in terms of attendance, general and local contributions, and responsiveness to the principle of financial accounting?

10. Does the candidate evidence a positive attitude toward study, personal improvement, and spiritual growth?

11. If this person has been involved in any conduct which could reflect negatively on her or his ability to minister, have you counseled with the mission center president to determine if this should be a factor in processing this recommendation?

12. Is the candidate's appearance and manner of dress acceptable to the congregation?

13. Does the candidate enjoy adequate health to fulfill the demands of the office?

14. What is the reaction of your counselors to this call?

15. What will be the likely reaction of the people assembled in legislative session of conference to this call?

16. What will be the likely reaction of the spouse and other members of the candidate's family to this call?

17. Please share how the ministry of this person can be related to the congregation's ministry to its members in terms of: "Each One, Reach One" and "A Disciple's Generous Response."

18. Please list persons who could serve as a potential mentor to this person.

Information for the Pastor or Other Calling Officer

1. This form is to be completed by the administrative officer initiating the call of a person to priesthood. On completion, it should be forwarded to the mission center president for further consideration and approval. You are not to approach the candidate about the call until the mission center president's approval has been obtained, and you have been notified to discuss the call with the candidate.

2. An indication of divine call is *required.* Having said this, it should be understood that your experience as initiating officer need not be dramatic or completely without question on your part.

   You are to use your best judgment—not only concerning the spiritual experience regarding the call, but on every aspect that might affect ordination. That is, you are to take a "wholistic" approach to the leadings of the Holy Spirit. You will *not* be asked to "defend" your discernment of the call, simply to share it.

3. Confirmation of the call (from a second person in the congregation sensing the divine intent) is appropriate but not mandatory.

4. If you sense the call, but are unclear as to the office, contact the mission center president for further counsel.

5. As the initiating officer regarding this call, you are part of a team that will determine proceeding forward to ordination. You should see yourself as a member of that team, rather than strictly the proponent of this particular call. Our system relies on the Holy Spirit working through the administrative officers of the church to discern the divinity of the call, to identify the candidate's strengths and weaknesses, the needs for ministry, etc. The strength of this system is in gaining a number of perspectives. It is possible that on occasion the mission center president will evaluate the situation differently, in which case this form will be returned to you for further consultation to occur. Your integrity is fulfilled by initiating the recommendation for ordination, in response to the light you have received.

6. There are a number of considerations for ordination: acceptance of his or her ministry by the people, personal standards to be met, the need for the candidate's ministry in a priesthood capacity, and ultimately the readiness of the candidate.

7. Personal standards should be met before ordination, as well as to retain a priesthood license. These include stewardship compliance, continued training, and standards of personal conduct (see the statement of Priesthood Standards and Qualifications printed on this form).

8. If you have felt moved to process a call, but you know the candidate does not meet some of the priesthood standards, first give ministry to the person in the area of inadequacy, obtaining some response without revealing a specific call. If your conviction of the call persists, you should process the call with a notation explaining the deficiency, ministry given, and the candidate's response. But a specific call should at no time be shared with the candidate before the approval by the mission center president. After approval of the mission center president, the candidate may be approached about the call, and encouraged to meet the standards. If the candidate subsequently meets all the standards and the congregation has approved ordination by a formal vote of the congregation at a congregation conference, ordination can proceed.

9. *After* approval for candidacy is given by the church and you are notified to proceed, you as the initiating officer may approach the candidate. The candidate should be informed of your role in the process, and that the mission center president's approval has been obtained. You should review with the candidate: the Priesthood Standards and Qualifications, a Plan for Service requirement, and the Pre-Ordination Temple School courses requirements. (It may be at this time that you become aware of personal standards which are not being met.)

10. The candidate should give prayerful consideration before accepting the call, realizing the commitment to training and the service which the call requires. While the candidate may want personal validation of the call, this is not strictly necessary. You might encourage the candidate to weigh all considerations—the needs of the church for ministry which he or she can give; the time demands for preparation; and the skills, talents, and gifts which the candidate possesses, together with his or her sense of being called.

11. If the candidate has questions regarding the office, the standards, or the timing of ordination, you should feel free to contact the mission center president to help answer such questions. You can also expect help from the mission center president to establish the Plan for Ministry.

Send this form to the mission center president. Do not approach the candidate about the call until you have received clearance to do so.

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